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The Impertinent Dust

• Bruce P. Woodford

D R. NELDER — Professor of Literature — prowling through the stacks at the public library, suddenly knew he was sick of it. And for the first time in twenty years he took notice of things. He saw the dust along the metal shelves of the stacks, and dust lying over the dormant books and in corners of the floor. There was a chalky dryness in the air and a dry sound in the low voices of people in the next aisle. He halted and heard, as though for the first time, all the low ambiguous rustlings and whispers and scrapes and turning of papers that surrounded him, and he was suddenly sick of it.

For over twenty years he had known little else. He had been at the University for so long that it seemed to him now he had lost some intimate and subtle sense of the world. He had become ingrown and near-sighted over an endless procession of ill-written and unimaginative themes and incompetent test papers. He had never been a particularly good teacher, but was considered a dependable and safely academic man who read each class the same lessons and who occasionally missed the point of a joke.

"The Hell with it," he whispered softly.

He tossed the book back onto a shelf beside all the other dusty books and walked out into the sunlight. It was late summer and the bright air was warm and windless. Across the open parkway which surrounded

the library, a row of green benches was arranged in a semicircle around a spouting fountain. Several of them were occupied by old men and by an occasional tired woman stopping to rest her heavy shopping-bag and to stare blankly at the vomiting bronze seals in the fountain.

How green everything looks, he came to him. thought. How, how

Voluptuous was the word that

He was still a young man but he was tired, and he was sick of the slow sapless withering of his existence, and he was filled with a faint resentment toward everything which contributed to it. He walked toward a vacant bench nursing a silent grudge toward all the papers and books and shelves and dusts that the large world of men contained. He sat down and lit a cigarette and looked at the grass beyond the fountain and at the cloudless sky over the city and the slow casual figures of people walking about on the grass and the pavements under the cloudless sky.

A vague sense of his own failure, and the memory and regret — which he had believed long ago stamped out — of an unfulfilled ambition returned to him. He had wanted to write, but there had been too many obstacles, too many practical considerations. He had dreamed once of being great and important and famous, of shocking the world with his terrifying revelations, of stunning the miserly and the mean, of shat-

tering the infamous illusions of the powerful.

Instead, he scrawled red marks on the abortive literary efforts of impudent students who would one day themselves be miserly, mean and infamous. And he was sick of it. In his own way he too had been miserly, and his life had grown mean, and what he said never shattered nor shocked. He had grown dry and dusty.

He glanced about him at the faces of old men staring at their feet, absorbed in that last clinging warmth of a vanishing season; and he saw that they too were dry and dust ridden. From a near bench an elderly woman rose and shuffled away dragging a shopping-bag which struck her thin ankles at every step. The afternoon was already far advanced and people were beginning to drift toward him, slowly, uncertainly, as though reluctant to spend another evening in the littered corners into which their lives had long and imperceptibly settled.

Across the semicircle a dark haired woman sat down. She was alone and wore a white dress. She was younger than the others. She seemed to be staring at him, and for a moment Dr. Nelder thought perhaps he had known her somewhere — perhaps even a former student; but he quickly recognized his mistake and looked away without knowing why he looked away. But his eyes continued in a wide searching arc and returned to watch her. She sat with her skirt slightly drawn up, her exposed knees crossed and pointed in his direction, and the afternoon sunlight penetrating the fabric of her dress showed white legs above the knees. She continued to stare at him, and then (he was reminded of a cat before a fireplace)

with a casual gesture she stretched, holding her body erect, breasts lifted firmly, and settled back in comfort, her eyes calmly and steadily regarding him.

He was still a young man and he looked upon her with a young fascination. After several minutes two yet younger men in uniform approached and stopped directly in front of her, and Dr. Nelder could see them talking. He could hear nothing that was said, but he noticed the girl appeared to answer. Then as quickly as the soldiers had approached, they departed and their steps now moved with a kind of secret assurance.

When they were gone, the girl rose quickly and, with the same attitude of assurance, walked out of the park in another direction. She glanced back once as she entered the street, and Dr. Nelder suddenly realized that she would meet the young men at some designated hotel room that same afternoon.

He had never seen it before, yet he knew by some instinct what he had seen, and he was astonished at the casual and almost flippant efficiency of the whole procedure — nor could he forget that she had first looked at him.

And he thought suddenly that not all the dust was dead and dry, that some was crude and coarse and young. Some of it was caught up and swept along into the gutter, but the low ambiguous rustlings and whispers and scrapes of it were caused by what was not yet withered and old, by a passion that was both impudent and shocking.

Dr. Nelder was startled and properly shocked by what he had seen, and it made his life seem the more academic. He knew how nearsighted he had become, how he had

lost a sense of the world; and Dr. Nelder went home with a firm resolution that he and his wife would take a vacation. They both needed a rest, some change from the narrowed and withering routine of their lives, and a reaffirmation of their youth.

"What in the world you driving at?" his wife said to him.

She stood by the gas range stirring thick slices of onion into a kettle of potato soup.

"A vacation," he told her. "I've been thinking the whole afternoon that what we both need is a vacation."

"Vacation?" she said. "What kind of a vacation?"

"A trip, maybe," he said quietly. "It was a beautiful day and I was thinking we might go somewhere . . ."

"A trip?" his wife echoed. "But how, on your salary?" And with all the things that need to be done around here? Besides, what kind of vacation do you think it would be for me? Probably just more and more cleaning up.

"But I was thinking of just getting away for a while," he said. "We could take a bus up to the mountains and just stay in a small place. It wouldn't cost much. And you wouldn't have to do anything but rest."

He moved toward her at the stove; he wanted to slip his arm around her waist. He thought of sun still warm in the late afternoons and grass still green under a clear sky.

She stirred the soup.

"You haven't read the paper yet?" she said.

He said nothing but went into the dining room. When the meal was ready, they sat down at the

table and dipped spoons into the soup. After several moments his wife looked up and saw he was not eating.

"Too hot?" she asked with a hint of sharpness.

"Yes," he said.

He spoke with a vague expression coming into his eyes. He thought of the vacation, of green all over a world of high mountains and somewhere a river and a cabin of rustic logs — and even perhaps yet visible on the highest peaks, a little snow. He thought they were young again and that they walked along a steep bridle path in the woods and looked out over the broad countryside.

Suddenly he wondered why he had not been a farmer — a farmer was always close to earth, close to nature and the ways of life.

"We'll have to be realistic about the vacation, I'm afraid," his wife said. Her voice was sympathetic, but steady. "We can't afford it, and there's no point in dwelling upon the fact further."

He did not look up, but stared at a large limp slice of onion in his soup.

It was true. He knew that they could not really afford a vacation. He had never made a good salary; she had sometimes reminded him of that. In her subtle, realistic way, she had goaded him to work harder, to apply himself and get ahead. And he had worked, but in the end he had merely buried himself under the dusty debris of old books and the endless rustlings of pedestrian papers. Suddenly he thought that it was not the papers; really it was his wife who had cut that young impertinent ground from under him; it was she who had made him give up his ambitions; it was her suffocating realism.

They had finished the rest of their meal in sullen silence, but when his wife began to clear away the dishes, he made a gesture to help. She brushed him aside.

"You'll break something," she said, unsmiling. "Go in the other room and read your paper."

He went into the living room and turned on the lamp beside his chair and looked at the paper. He shook the creases from the newsprint and stared at the headlines, but he had grown too short-sighted and could not see them clearly. They faded before him into a blur of the same ambiguous rustlings and whispers and the same vague knowledge of other men leading mean lives and stunning the world with their misery and infamous acts of violence and rage. And even the rage seemed dry as common dust now. He looked at the paper without seeing it in his hand. And he was sick of it.

But suddenly the vision of green grass, of late afternoon sunlight and a fountain of vomiting seals returned to him (What was that word now? The word which had come to him), and of bare white knees and swift feet walking away. He let the paper slip from his hands and rose from the chair. He went

into the front hall and thrust his arms into a light sport jacket. For a moment now he hesitated as his wife entered the living room and glanced toward him.

"Where you going?" she said.

"To the library. Some reference work." He felt a quick tweak of guilt and misgiving at his impertinence.

"Oh, all right," his wife said.

He wished she had not said that. She turned and began a search behind cushions of the divan for her basket of knitting, found it beneath the paper and settled down to her work. Her needles made a faint brittle sound like the rustle and click of twigs. For a minute longer he watched half-hoping she would become suspicious and raise some objection to his going, but she did not look up and Dr. Nelder turned and went out the door.

He was sick of it.

But now he was a little frightened, too. He started to whistle an old collegiate tune, but his lips produced only a small parched squeak. All the inexorable ambiguous and intimate rustlings of the city seemed to crowd in upon him as he walked on through the darkening late-summer streets toward the library.

REVEREND ANTHONY LAUCK, C.S.C., has just been appointed Head of the Department of Art at Notre Dame University. His principal art work is done in sculpture, although he also designs and teaches such subjects as mosaic and stained glass. At present he is busy organizing an exhibition of original Romanesque art for the Notre Dame autumn Festival of Art.

VICTOR TEMMERMAN, sculptor, is Professor of Art at The Institut Superior, Saint Lucas, Ghent, Belgium. (See page 6.)



OUR LADY OF THE UNIVERSITY by Anthony J. Lauck, C.S.C. Limestone.
Entrance to the University of Notre Dame, Indiana.



SACRED HEART by Victor Temmerman. Bronze.
Church at Hasselt, Belgium.

Sciences and Humanities in the Modern World

In the past century we have witnessed striking developments in the world of learning and radical shifts in the relative importance of various disciplines. We have seen, for instance, the emergence of new social sciences, the great progress of physical sciences, and the assumption by these latter disciplines of a pre-eminence held earlier by philosophy, theology, or philology. Perennial problems about the relations of the various disciplines in some total "hierarchy" and age-old tensions between major areas of study have only continued, if indeed they have not increased, with these developments.

Yet there has also been in more recent times a keener sense of interdependence among many of the disciplines. There have been attempts, for example, to adapt the method of the physical sciences to the social sciences and even to the humanities. However, such adaptations have not always been successful. Preoccupation with such borrowing has, in fact, often led scholars to neglect the vigorous refinement of methods more proper to their own fields. In general, though, it would appear that the increased tempo of progress in human learning has forced most disciplines to an ever closer scrutiny of the persistent and fundamental questions of all study: what object a particular discipline is actually studying; what the peculiar character of its method is; what facts and values it is specifically concerned with; what the relations are between these values and other human values.

Naturally these problems have had repercussions on teaching as well as on speculation and research. In the past decade, especially, the spectre of atomic destruction has given new urgency to thinking about the function of science in the struggle for survival and the function of all disciplines in the creation of something worthy of survival. The times, it is clear, demand a more serious effort at dialogue between all the disciplines and a clarification of their roles in a common educational effort.

The five papers which follow deal with some of these problems, though not in any systematic or complete fashion. Dr. Hatzfeld gives a strong statement of the differences which Pascal suggested between the spirit of geometry and the spirit of finesse and urges the claims of the humanities as an instrument of complete education. Dr. Crosson begins, paradoxically enough, with the same distinction in Pascal, but he arrives at a radically different concept of science—that it is a humanistic discipline.

The next two papers take a more general view of the commerce between disciplines. Dr. Nemetz is concerned with some of the difficulties created by certain pervasive attitudes of contemporary scientists and humanists; he points to some possibilities of transcending these difficulties. Dr. Fisher discusses the Catholic scholar's position with regard to revealed and human truth. He then broadens the Thomistic understanding of this position to suggest in what way every discipline has a definite autonomy.

Finally, Brother Fidelian writes about the difficulties of dialogue within a discipline (rather than across disciplines), in this case, literary criticism.

The Role of the Humanities in a Catholic College

● Helmut Hatzfeld

PASCAL MADE the priceless discovery that the human mind works on three different levels with three quite different methods of penetration, levels which are constitutionally superimposed upon one another but strictly separated and not bridgeable. All three are necessary for the mental integration of a balanced human mind. These methods of penetration were called by Pascal the spirit of geometry, the spirit of refinement and the spirit of charity; their objects are the sciences, the arts, and religion. Since Pascal was speaking as a serious and cultured Christian, it is not out of place to apply his categories to almost the same educational triad in the curriculum of a Catholic college today. The application should make meaningful and explicit what certainly lingers in the subconscious mind of every intelligent college graduate.

In a responsible college the spirit of geometry is applied to the study of mathematics and natural sciences only. It is the spirit of calculation, abstraction, and measurement; it provides laws and rules which enable men to span bridges, launch satellites, split the atom, and discover galaxies. But by its nature the spirit of geometry cannot be applied to the full human life. It is only by coincidence that this spirit may arouse awe, cosmic anguish and the awareness of a prime cause or prime mover. It is a spirit of cold detachment, strict objectivity, and scientific exactness, priceless in its own sphere. It moves in a world of truths without direct significance for life, a world which the slightest infiltration of sentiment or philosophical speculation endangers. Archimedes warned the non-initiated not to enter this reserved area: "Ageometricos me eis ito." The non-initiated would be shocked there by an inhuman language of signs and figures, a cool but boundless curiosity and unhampered drive to technical perfection. The tragic culmination is the automaton, the robot, the machine substituting for man up to the translation of thought, the long distance missiles and space navigation with long distance robot photographers—all reminiscent of the *Tower of Babel* on another level. It is an open secret that the secular college, taking the *esprit de géométrie* out of its proper domain and applying it (contrary to Pascal's insight) to the whole of life, cannot help but produce highly skilled technicians who are also positivists, materialists, pragmatists, and determinists. Here the scientist-determinist is accepted without question and replacement of psychology by robotology is mutely accepted.

A Catholic college averts this danger by keeping the scientific spirit to the sphere to which it belongs, and by balancing it with what Pascal calls the spirit of charity—supernatural religion. In the light of religion the marvelous world of science is valued as a gift of God to be decoded by the human mind. In this light the cosmos and the human mind appear

as correlated creations of a Divine Love which has not condemned man to a world of physical and biological laws, but reveals to him certain mysteries concerning his special destiny. Religious education counteracts a science which, left alone, threatens culture with a drift to moral and physical self-destruction. The religious values, clearly appealing to the spirit of charity, are life values—eternal values directed to the worship of God, to self-sanctification and possible sanctification of the world. If the spiritual values sometimes help to create culture, the cultural achievements are by-products only and as such have nothing to do with the spirit of charity. Products of literature and art—whether subservient to another cause or used for themselves—belong to the spirit of refinement. For the cult of the spirit the college has a particular division—the humanities, the division of human refinement.

In what does this spirit of refinement consist, which only the humanities can give? It consists first in the acquisition of a historical and philosophical perspective which provides for a just, fair, and reliable judgment of events and personalities through psychological assessment of facts, actions, and social groups. A true understanding of history is very important, since history provides lessons in the propriety and efficacy of human actions in given circumstances. A critical judgment of history will not praise or condemn actions from a narrow or superficial viewpoint or from political bias, the case, for instance, with Nazi and Bolshevik historians. Rather it leads to great vistas and vantage points which may easily link (though tragically) the present East-West crisis to the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C., to the crusades of the Middle Ages, to the liberation of Spain from the Moors, to the battle of Lepanto in 1571, to the defeat of the Turks near Vienna in 1683. In all of these events there was at stake the same ideal, namely, the defense of the Greek and the Christian concept of individual liberty against the ideology of self-debasement and slavish subservience of the masses. Besides providing such great perspectives, history also stimulates a personal pondering on human decisions, choices, passions and visions, the sacrifices of great personalities who are neither abject sinners nor remote saints but something like ourselves. The best understanding of the complexity of history often comes from works of literature. It is, for instance, from Dante's *Divina Commedia* that we learn even better than from his political treatise *De Monarchia* the delicacy of the relations between Pope and Emperor during the Middle Ages, and on a larger scale those between Church and State at any time. History offers strange lessons about great political visions and petty political interests, about the elusiveness of concepts like clericalism and anti-clericalism.

The refinement acquired by the humanities through literature consists less in the critical use of literary works as historic documents than in the capacity of appraising aesthetic, i.e. artistic and literary values. The acquisition of this kind of critical judgment is bound to lead to a mature taste, certainly another worth-while goal of the humanities. This artistic taste has nothing to do with art for art's sake nor with snobbishness or beatnick-mindedness or that relativistic fad of finding beauty everywhere—in the products of the primitives as much as in Greek sculpture, in a significant classic as well as in a bestseller. On the contrary, it provides a forma-

tion of rectitude on the aesthetical level comparable to the formation of a right conscience on the moral level. These two domains come so close to one another that the French dramatist Desmarests-de-Saint-Sorlin did not hesitate to declare that cultivated literary taste necessarily leads to a kind of *intellectual ascetism*. He meant this in the sense that refined literary sensibility will reject, without the necessity of an Index or outside prohibition, the sensational, the cheap, the superficial, and the morally ambiguous and thus create by dint of a purified taste a climate of cleanliness, of purity, of dignity, and excellence.

The books to be studied in the humanities are those which cure the restlessness of the body and the mind with an interior catharsis. The effect of studying great tragedies and aesthetically significant literature is that one becomes convinced of one's own frailty and the virtual dangers coming from such situations as brought about the fall of the tragic hero. Great literature is irreplaceable. It dramatizes problems and truths through imagination and symbolization in concrete and overwhelming examples. Existentialists and phenomenologists, by an understandable exaggeration, consider literature even a substitute for abstract philosophy. Literature actually offers insights into human conditions with quite another intensity than the factual cases of history, the clinical cases of psychology, and the generalizations and abstractions of metaphysics.

Taste for great literature necessarily develops more and more a sense for poetry, third asset of the humanities. In poetry human feelings and cravings and excellence in the use of language meet in a unique fusion. Here taste develops that disinterested pleasure which teaches the sense of form, style, and harmony, recognized first analytically and then intuitively in the artifact. One who enjoys literature as art discovers a complex in which thought, feeling, and imagination merge into a higher form of reality. The student of literature discovers that language is more than a means of direct communication; on a higher level it is a means of expression in which language acquires a particular distinction with new arrangements of sound and meaning—unique and spiritually rewarding. Psychologically, good poetry demands a concentration of mind and heart and leads to an absorption of the spirit of the kind known by the research worker in the best moments when he is close to a discovery or in prayer when it leads to the deepest recollection.

A Catholic college in its humanities section is a permanent demonstration that the finest things of nature are an invitation to the realm of grace and not a hindrance to it. Poetry refines the student's understanding of language and shows him the difference between the virtue of stylistic ambiguity in the poetic symbol and the curse of ambiguity on the lexical everyday level. The choices in reading made by the college, the teacher, and the student according to individual preference give him an elasticity which other more fixed and impersonal subjects cannot give. A comparison between different literatures and languages teaches the student the spirit of the nations through the written and spoken word and shows him that French intellectuality is different from the Anglo-Saxon spirit of practical organization and from Spanish daydreaming and German idealism. Poetry is a key to the other arts in the sense that all the arts are transfigurations of

life through aesthetic forms and are, therefore, poetic by implication. The employment of color, stone, or sound rather than language does not destroy the analogous basis of the creative process and the artistic goal. Poetry contains in its own substance all sorts of elements applicable to the discovery of the analogies in the sister arts. Here emerge avenues to a comparative or truly humanistic art appreciation.

Beyond understanding criticism, the humanities convey to the whole personality all those accomplishments which strike one in history and the arts as likable and desirable qualities. These accomplishments are not virtues and do not form the saint but form the gentlemen in a democracy as they formed the knight in the Middle Ages and the courtier in the Renaissance. The qualities of a gentleman are courtesy, gentleness, elegance, graciousness and civility, the gift of conversation, and the use of cultured forms of language.

It makes a big difference whether the customs of a cultured life develop gradually from a humanistic college education or whether they are acquired for the occasion from Emily Post—just as it makes a difference whether a student has acquired an inner flair for what is objectionable in literature or whether he avoids such books only because he is told that they are supposed to be bad. But we have to understand that the humanities, as we have described them thus far, do not in themselves complete the formation of the college graduate. The humanities certainly do not provide the young man a capsuled art and science of living; they have already done much if, in the words of Robert M. Hutchins, they prepare the student to educate himself and make good use of his leisure time.

One cannot avoid linking the humanities to humanism, and humanism was almost a synonym for the study of Latin and Greek to the end of the nineteenth century. Today, a Catholic college ought to be the place to revive classical studies as far as that is still possible. Strange to say, we live in a moment when the whole *orbis catholicus* has been called by the highest authority to participate not only in the liturgy but in the Latin of the liturgy. With the possible revival of the study of Latin, even on such a small basis, the ancient literatures may again appear more attractive in their original than in translation, and since the real treasures of literary antiquity are hidden in Greek culture, Homer and Sophocles may still be an incentive to the study of Greek. It is a great experience to see in the originals (not in the hastily read translations) the high level of humanity and humaneness in the parental, conjugal, neighborly, and political relations of those pagan Greeks as described in the *Odyssey*—all under the eyes of the gods or *sub specie aeternitatis*. It is also appalling to realize from Greek tragedy that men and gods alike are helpless against a *moira*, a destiny which seems to reign arbitrary and almost absurd in a world without redemption.

The humanists of the secular college (as they did during the Renaissance) make bold today to share with the Greeks a relativistic ethics of compromise based on exclusively human relations, totally rejecting the eternal destiny and responsibility of the individual soul. Jean-Paul Sartre has revamped ancient tragedy in a revolutionary Promethean sense debunking the divine by vulgar devices and a barbarian language. Sartre's scoffing

at a world without finality is a real challenge to a Christian humanism which with its redeemed sensibility, can read ancient myth for its own enrichment. The Christian humanist recognizes the stress on the human, the humane and the humanistic, even the humanitarian, as defensible *secundum quid* and as an excellent basis for human relations with all men in a pluralistic society and in the *civitas terrena*. He accepts the stress on the enigmatic and unexplainable in the cosmos and in the biological and psychological mazes of man, not as an absurdity but as a paradox and as a mystery. Paradox and mystery open by necessity and with an ineluctable analogy the door to Faith.

Recalling at this point Pascal's thesis that there is no bridge between the spirit of refinement in the humanities and the spirit of charity given only by Christ and the Christian religion, we can see that well-directed humanities in a Catholic college reach their goal on the highest level, if they enable students to see this Pascalian situation clearly and not get lost trying to bridge the abyss between the two with meaningless spans of human construction. On the spiritual level charity makes the heart of man "restless until it finds rest in God," while on the intellectual level the humanities make his mind poised, clear, and balanced.

Science as a Humanistic Discipline

● F. J. Crosson

If WE BEGIN by adverting to Pascal's famous opposition of the geometrical spirit and the spirit of finesse, this essay may be said to suggest that the opposing of these spirits is *not* the opposing of the scientific spirit to the humanistic spirit, but the opposing of two forms of humanistic activity. There is then an opposition, but it lies not merely in two different approaches to the things of human experience, but in a bifurcation deep in human nature itself, and which may be indicated by pointing to mathematics and politics (the latter in a broad and classical sense).

The tension (if one may use such a strong word in speaking of what may appear unlikely opposites) between mathematics and politics goes back at least to the Pythagorean Brotherhood (which, be it noted in passing, was a religious brotherhood¹) and to Plato, who in the *Republic* prescribes the mathematical curriculum in order to raise the minds of his students from the world of human things to another world.²

For a more recent expression of this tension, one may cite the recent work of Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*: "The sciences today have been forced to adopt a 'language' of mathematical symbols which, though

¹ See the comments on this in Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers* (New York, 1959), pp. 33-39.

² *Republic*, 525.

it was originally meant only as an abbreviation for spoken statements, now contains statements that in no way can be translated back into speech." She continues,

The reason why it may be wise to distrust the political judgment of scientists *qua* scientists is not primarily their lack of "character"—that they did not refuse to develop atomic weapons—or their naivete—that they did not understand that once these weapons were developed they would be the last to be consulted about their use—but precisely the fact that they move in a world where speech has lost its power.³

Miss Arendt goes on to state the aim of her book as follows: "What I propose therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing."⁴

Her words here echo some remarks on symbolism in mathematics by Alfred North Whitehead.

It is a profoundly erroneous truism, repeated by all copy-books and by eminent people when they are making speeches, that we should cultivate the habit of thinking of what we are doing. The precise opposite is the case. Civilization advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform without thinking about them.⁵

These introductory remarks may be summarized by quoting one last phrase from Miss Arendt. Referring to the language of mathematical science, she says, "There may be truths beyond speech, and they may be of great relevance to man in the singular, that is, to man insofar as he is not a political being, whatever else he may be."⁶ The contention of these pages is precisely that this "something else" in man finds one of its most fundamental expressions in the sciences, and that however different from or opposed to man's wordly or political activities it be, it is a dimension of his being whose suppression truncates the human spirit.

* * *

Let us consider two fundamental objections addressed to the notion of science as a humanistic discipline. One is that science (prototypically mathematical physics) does not deal with the human world, with the world of values, of beauty, of homecomings and tragedy. The evidence for this objection is ancient: the familiar human world had shadows cast on it by Democritus: "By convention colored, by convention sweet, by convention bitter; in reality only atoms and the void."⁷ I mention Democritus only to point out that this objection as addressed to science today is only a more particular form of the opposition between nature and convention, or between theory and praxis. Theory has always said to praxis, things are not what they seem. In so far as this objection is a special case, it is funda-

³ *Op. cit.* (New York, 1959), p. 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵ *Introduction to Mathematics* (New York, 1948), pp. 41-42.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁷ Diels, *Fragments der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin, 1922), II, 97.

mentally both logically and chronologically prior to the development of modern science.

The second objection is really a corollary of the first, though it is one more frequently heard, namely that science is *inimical* to human values, to the values of finesse, and it is on this basis that the sciences and the humanities are often opposed.

In general, the rejoinder to these objections will be to maintain that science does deal with the human world, the world of immediate everyday experience, and that the type of objectivity which it pursues, while eliminating those elements which are data only for the spirit of finesse, is none the less rooted in the exigencies and dynamisms of the structure of the human person.

* * *

The earliest of the modern encounters between the common sense world and the natural sciences, and the one most commonly referred to, was the elaboration of the renaissance astronomies, beginning with the Copernican revolution. There are few incidents which have given rise to such persistent mythology as the work of Copernicus and Kepler.⁸ The notion that the new astronomy meant the demotion or effacement of man's importance is commonplace—and wrong. It certainly meant the overturning of a powerful and ancient *Weltanschauung*, but far from "all coherence" being gone (in Donne's phrase), far from the diminution of man's stature, it led to the very apotheosis of the human spirit. One example: a recent study of the seventeenth century controversy over the decay of nature states: ". . . the new astronomy of Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo revealed yet another sign of the *broken harmony* of the universe."⁹ The unconscious irony in this statement lies in the fact that the very title of one of Kepler's greatest works was the *Harmonies of the Universe*.

Alfred Noyes in what may not be good poetry, but is accurate historically, expresses it this way:

. . . I wish that old Copernicus could see
 How, through his truth, that once dispelled a dream,
 Broke the false axle-trees of heaven, destroyed
 All central certainty in the universe
 And seemed to dwarf mankind, the spirit of man
 Laid hold on law . . .
 And mounting, slowly, surely, step by step,
 Entered into its kingdom and its power.¹⁰

In the seventeenth century, man was able for the first time to transcend the problematic whose limits were circumscribed by the earth and things as seen from the earth. But this does not mean, and never will mean, that the resulting "objectivity" ceases to be rooted in human perspectives: we will never be so "objective" as to pay equal attention to equal portions of

⁸ Perhaps a rival is Galileo and the Tower of Pisa experiment: cf. Lane Cooper, *Aristotle, Galileo and the Tower of Pisa* (Ithaca, 1935).

⁹ Victor Harris, *All Coherence Gone* (Chicago, 1949), p. 2.

¹⁰ *Watchers of the Sky* (New York, 1922), p. 135.

mass or space throughout the universe.¹¹ This fertile transposition of frames of reference in thought, difficult though it was for men of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, does not seem so strange today—few if any “humanists” object to explaining the motions of the planets by the heliocentric theory. The later instances of transcending the perspectives of the everyday world however have been harder to follow, or at any rate have not yet been assimilated. Non-Euclidean geometries, for example, or infinite sets, or quantum mechanics. The foundations of modern mathematics—not merely its far-removed conclusions—are based on a systematic generalization or formalization which empties them of direct empirical or even imaginative reference.¹²

It is tempting to characterize the formalism of modern science, as Polanyi tends to do, in terms of a commitment: the inclination or decision to allow our symbols to lead us on, to allow them their full generality, their full amplitude. A deliberately paradoxical reference to this is Bertrand Russell’s well-known remark that “mathematics is the subject in which we never know what we are talking about, nor whether what we are saying is true.” But it is by following out its first intuitions, by entrusting them to a formal system, that modern science has been led to both its transcending of the everyday world and its overwhelming achievements. We entrust the guidance of our thoughts to conceptions which we believe to possess a rationality beyond our first appreciation of them. The predictions made on the basis of thoroughly formalized theory of atomic structure have been consistently and strikingly verified.¹³

Nor should this formalism be viewed as merely a mechanical shorthand which enables us to elaborate the consequences of a given hypothesis or of given axioms more surely and in more detail than intuitive apprehension could. One of the most stunning theorems of modern logic and mathematics—the incompleteness theorem of Kurt Gödel—shows that this is not the case.

Gödel proved in 1931 that not only can there not be an absolute proof of consistency for any deductive (formal) system in which the whole of arithmetic is expressible, but also that there is an endless number of true arithmetical statements which cannot be formally deduced from any specified set of axioms. To put it in a concrete way, no computer can be devised which would be capable of proving (i.e., deriving from a set of axioms) all true arithmetical statements.¹⁴

It is not then suggested that the scientist abandons himself to formalism in the sense of an impersonal calculus of symbols. The elaboration of the formalism is always guided by an “inarticulate apprehension” (intuition if you will) of the heuristic function. Sometimes this apprehension is oriented by the values of beauty and elegance, rather than immediate fruitful-

¹¹ Cf. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago, 1958), p. 3.

¹² For an example of the formalism to which I refer, see Sir Arthur Eddington’s discussion of the theory of groups in *New Pathways in Science* (Cambridge, 1935).

¹³ Cf. Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 148-9.

¹⁴ For an informal presentation of Gödel’s incompleteness theorem, see E. Nagel and J. Newman, *Gödel’s Proof* (New York, 1958).

ness.¹⁵ Sometimes it anticipates the formalism by searching to express a regularity or rationality in nature which is not at first seen in the symbols, for example, Kepler's third law, or Bode's "law",¹⁶ or Einstein's formulation of the special theory of relativity. The latter is usually presented as a response to Michelson-Morley experiment, but in fact the role of this experiment in Einstein's thought was negligible,¹⁷ and in fact he had reached its results by analysis prior to its publication.

Even where technical results precede theoretical innovation, they are often not sufficient to produce the latter by simple correlation and inference. An example from a different field may be enlightening here:

The features which make up the Gothic style are . . . the pointed arch, the flying buttress, and the rib vault. Not one of them is a Gothic invention . . . What the Gothic style brought to these motifs was their combination for a new esthetic purpose. This purpose was to enliven inert masses of masonry, to quicken spatial motion, to reduce a building to a seeming system of innervated lines of action. These esthetic advantages are infinitely more significant for an understanding of the Gothic style than whatever technical advantages the use of ribs, flying buttresses, and pointed arches may have meant.¹⁸

The transcending of the world of immediate experience by modern science never means the extirpation of its roots in that world, nor of the values of the spirit of finesse and intuitive apprehension which frequently seem more appropriate there. Never the less, the following out of the mathematical formalization of the sciences of nature has led to the realization that it can be dealt with—explained, represented, predicted—in ways unsuspected by earlier centuries. The scientific understanding of the world emerges by way of a radical modification of or change of perspective from the natural understanding of the world.

* * *

A second major objection to the notion of science as a humanistic discipline is that it is inimical to human values.

The most direct way to respond to this would be to consider the premise on which it appears to be based, namely, that if only "atoms and the Void" exist, then the values by which we guide our lives are not objective, not real. Far from being an objection or accusation, this seems to be true. Values are not objective, in the scientific sense of that term: their mode of existence lies between that of subject and object, and if science abstracts from the personal levels of meaning of its object, it will necessarily eliminate the value-phenomena.

This is why science is always closely associated with the "atoms and the void" view of the universe. The objectivity of science is made possible

¹⁵ Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

¹⁶ Koestler, *op. cit.*, p. 549.

¹⁷ Polanyi, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁸ N. Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture* (London: Penguin edition, 1957), p. 75.

only by ignoring those modes of presence which involve the subject as a constituent element of the meaning of the data. Hence the general effort of the positive sciences is to formulate propositions which can establish consensus without regard to the value responses of the subject.

In fact, however, the subject and his values are involved as a condition of the scientific enterprise in a number of ways.

First, with respect to the criterion of relevant or significant data. In popular writing, this question is generally ignored, and one gets the impression of science as a monolithic discipline which has been seeking better and better explanations of the facts since the time of Thales. In reality, the very notion of the "facts" is extremely relative—relative to the conception of 1) what it is to explain, and 2) what needs to be explained. The ideal of a complete theory in physics is not fixed because the idea of what has to be accounted for is not fixed. For classical physics, the identity of gravitational and inertial mass was not curious, it was not a source of wonder. For relativity theory, it is a fact to be explained. One might say that metaphysics differs from physical science in assuming that existence has to be explained. The wonder about the unaccounted-for aspects of experience moves in general at a deeper level in philosophy, but it is not the less present and recurrent in physics.¹⁹ Thus, the determination of atomic weights for which W. T. Richards was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1914 was described by a physicist in 1932 as "of little interest and significance as the determination of the average weight of a collection of bottles".²⁰

Another role of the subject as the conditioner of the scientific enterprise is in the application of "extra-scientific" principles to the explanations. The most notable example of this is the principle of economy ("Occam's Razor"), which has no justification in the area of scientific investigation itself. If it is to be founded, in the sense of assuring that the simpler explanation will be the more correct one, it can receive such a foundation only on a philosophical or ideological level. (Another example is the Lysenko doctrine on genetics in Marxist biology.)²¹ Actually, for all its basic importance, the principle of economy is not always determinant. Copernicus required more cycles and epicycles than Ptolemy to account for the motions of the heavenly bodies.²²

Perhaps the most personal of such conditioning elements is the acquisition and exercise of the skills necessary to original work on the part of the scientific investigator. The ability to perceive what is relevant—e.g. in cloud chamber photographs—or what is elegant and beautiful—e.g. in a mathematical proof—is derived from the assimilation of these skills to the point where, by their instrumentality, the scientist accedes to a type of significance which cannot be mechanically translated from the empirical elements which compose it.

¹⁹ Stephen Toulmin, *Philosophy of Science* (London, 1958), pp. 116-8.

²⁰ Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

²¹ Philip Frank, *Philosophy of Science* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.; 1957), ch. I.

²² Koestler, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

I believe that we come closest here to the traditionally humanistic roots of science, namely its relation to the liberal arts. Galileo wrote in a famous passage,

Science is written in that great book which stands continually open before our eyes—I mean the universe. But it cannot be understood if one does not understand the characters in which it is written. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures. Without knowledge of these we cannot understand its speech and can only wander vainly through an obscure labyrinth.²³

Science, then, is acquired through a discipline of symbols, a knowledge of language, which is to say it is the work of a liberal art, and itself a liberal knowledge. A non-verbal linguistic art, to be sure, but one which is our time has reaped the greatest triumphs of the liberal arts. Surely we have little to compare with the ancients in the verbal linguistic arts.

The verbal arts may indeed be those most important to political man, to man in his commerce with his fellows, but the non-verbal liberal arts have been the source of a typically modern humanism.

The traditional humanistic view tends to characterize humanism in terms of its concern with and preservation of the values of “finesse”, the human values. I do *not* understand this to mean that the humanistic disciplines or activities have man as their theme or object. Literature, for example, I take to be concerned with beauty, and not with man. Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, does not advert to the “tragic vision” of Sophocles, or the “profound insights” of Aeschylus, but analyzes the power of a drama in terms of its form,²⁴ of the way it is made, rather than what it “says”.²⁵

In general, the sense of these remarks has been that human values are not and cannot be the focus of (natural) scientific investigation, because of the type of abstraction or insight which defines its level of approach, but that human values nonetheless sustain and guide it. Moreover, it is ultimately the phenomena of the world of everyday experience which it seeks to explain or account for.

The nub of the difference lies in the character of “explanation” consequent upon the diverse levels of approach to these phenomena. Even within a particular science, these differences may manifest themselves, for example in these comments by a Gestalt psychologist on the methods of empirical psychologists.

One of the fundamental methods of natural science is analysis. The psychologist, therefore, confronted with a complex field of vision . . . feels naturally inclined to analyze this field into smaller and smaller entities whose properties he may study with more ease and with more hope of clear

²³ From *Il Saggiatore*, quoted in O. Bird, “Science and Mathematics in the Liberal Arts Curriculum,” in *Journal of General Education*, X (Jan., 1957), p. 24.

²⁴ For the meaning of the term “form” in literary theory which is assumed here, see “Form” in Shipley’s *Dictionary of World Literature*.

²⁵ Why many modern humanists do discuss the “tragic vision,” etc., is another question too large to enter into here.

results than an immediate consideration of the whole field would yield. Generally he does not ask himself what this procedure purports and if, perhaps, the term analysis is rather ambiguous....

Somehow, it is true, our observations also meant an analysis of the field. In our analysis, however, we have followed the natural and evident structures of the field instead of dissolving it theoretically and arbitrarily into minute local things which nobody ever sees.²⁶

It remains true, nevertheless, that the desire to recover a unity beyond the opposition of the sciences and the humanities is keenly felt. Bohr's attempt to erect a philosophy upon the complementarity principle suggests that the difference of perspectives presents itself at times as a kind of civil war, which both sides would like to end with a truce, if not an integral synthesis. For my part, I believe that greater understanding could ameliorate and even eliminate the antithetical attitudes so much in evidence. But I do not believe that a synthesis in anything like the ancient and medieval sense is possible. It is possible to include both within a larger perspective, but the two will not thereby constitute a single universe of discourse.

Science and the Humanities

● Anthony Nemetz

PROFITABLE discussion about the relation of science and the humanities presupposes that these terms be clearly understood and precisely defined. To proceed on the assumption that there is common agreement on the nature and scope of these disciplinary concepts is erroneous. There are indeed current tensions between the sciences and the humanities, and there is no hope of easing these tensions through discussion if either party insists on unilateral acceptance of his classificatory schema of the sciences. It is impossible to derive mutually satisfactory definitions of basic terms like *science* and *humanities* from the privileged portion of either term. In short, what constitutes a satisfactory definition already involves a disciplinary bias. As an alternative to presumptive definition as the basis of discussion, I would like to present some current attitudes and seldom spoken suspicions which serve to locate or isolate the areas of opposition which can be agreed upon. Then I want to propose one possible way of fruitfully discussing these. I intend to outline these attitudes in an extreme form, perhaps even to the point of caricature.

The first such attitude turns on the procedural methods of the natural

²⁶ W. Kohler, "Some Tasks of Gestalt Psychology" in *Psychologies of 1930* ed. Murchison (Worcester, 1930) p. 147.

scientist. Scientists are justly proud of their methods—methods which have allowed for a continuous and cumulative progress in knowledge and understanding. These methods convince the scientist of the significance of his every task and assure him of the inevitable progress of his discipline. But the very success of these methods leads some scientists to see the adoption of their methods as a touchstone of intellectual progress. It is a common attitude among scientists that the humanities are less developed than the sciences. The physical scientists' minimization of the social sciences is evidence of this attitude. Again the real problem is whether the social sciences would gain significantly by importing the methods of the natural sciences.

To put the matter another way, the humanities feel threatened by what they see as a Messianic complex on the part of the physical sciences. It should be noted that the humanists' suspicion is grounded less in the sciences themselves than in the logical positivists' philosophy of science. It is the positivists' philosophy of science which dichotomizes the intellectual world into cognitive and non-cognitive, and it is this same philosophy of science which restricts the meaning of evidence and argument to the area of public testability and confirmation. A final way of putting the methodological issue concerns the precise or exact sciences. The use of mathematics as a language and the procedures of logical analysis give the physical sciences a precision unmatched in the humanities. But precision in language may well be a variable relative to disciplinary purposes, and consequently not the touchstone of over-all disciplinary importance.

The question of disciplinary importance is the second broad area of tension between the sciences and the humanities. When one speaks about the importance of a given discipline, one is prescinding from intrinsic methodology and introducing the problem of the relation of the discipline to society and its members. A further issue raised by the same question turns on the norms by which the social effectiveness and employment of a discipline is judged. Scientists are outspokenly in favor of the humanities, and the humanities have a decided stake in the development of the sciences. But the grounds of interest are not common. The reason for the difference of concern is due in part to the behavior of the humanists themselves—at least in the way that the sciences interpret the humanities. In the extreme view, the humanities have argued to the existence of an elite culture of which they are the exclusive custodians and to which they are the principle contributors. In a less strident way, a non-partisan could easily get the impression that the humanities affect a studied uselessness whenever they are asked to characterize their social utility. They speak of the fullness of a man and his enriched life, but they often do so with a tone of social disinterestedness. In this aspect of the case the opposition between the sciences and the humanities emerges more clearly. Disinterestedness or detachment is an essential part of the scientist's creed, but the scientist combines a personal detachment from his results with genuine social concern for science in the sense that science as a discipline is something rather public. The scientist often regards the rewards of the humanities as something quite private—something that belongs essentially to the leisure hours rather than to the concerns of the day. No matter how distasteful this estimate is to

the humanities, it is in large measure a face they themselves have put in the mirror. The humanities can and do reply that the common good is well served if the private good—especially the private cultural good—is well served. But this argument has not caught the public's fancy or its favor, and the public may well be correct in holding that argument suspect.

This last line of opposition delineates the very core of the problem—namely, the image we have or make of science or the humanities as a discipline. Harlow Shapley in an article on the intellectual stance of the future says: "Our dealing with the future will take both logical analysis and imaginative poetry; it will take science *and* the humanities intermingled." This may well be the case, but the wisdom of the race suggests careful scrutiny of the intentions of the participants—especially the intentions of the marriage broker. The point is that the image or self-image of the respective disciplines determines the proper functional interpretation.

More concretely, the humanities have for some years advertised themselves as good in themselves, or have promised that knowledge of the humanities, like virtue, is its own reward. But something good in itself cannot be viewed as functional also without leaving the impression that the good in itself really means good in itself as a tool. The reason that the humanities have seen themselves as self-vindicating is because they have always thought of themselves as bringing an ordered intelligibility to the real world. Poets, no less than physicists, have thought of themselves as logical and analytical, and in direct touch and communion with the world of everyday experience. Probably nothing irritates a man in the humanities as much as being viewed as a dreamer of dreams with which he builds a paradise for his own fanatic sect. The very idea of intellectual discipline is seen in quite different terms by the sciences and the humanities. It has been stylish for some time to think of science as a public activity, and in some cases this overtness has been included in the very definition of science. When a scientist explains or predicts an event, his laws—understood as relational statements—do indeed result in an ordered view of experience. In this sense, science (like the humanities) sees itself as both discovering and endowing experience with meaning and order. In the post-Newtonian world, the terms employed by the scientist were basically sets of external relations—or at least were interpreted that way. By external relations, I mean terms which are in some way functionally available for public inspection. It is tempting to make an oversimplification and say that both science and the humanities see themselves as bringing an ordered intelligibility to the world—science in terms of external relations (force and mass, etc.) and the humanities in terms of internal relations (imagination, insight, etc.). However neat this would be, it would be false. Science has come to the point where it is no longer preoccupied simply with prying loose the secrets of nature; rather, the mission of science today is equally one of giving nature some secret to keep.

Such a task clearly demands more than a clear head and a hard nose; it demands creativity and imagination, aesthetic finesse, and poetic daring. This is why we now hear so much about the needed togetherness of the sciences and the humanities. For example, Derek Price sees an urgent need for a program called "The Scientific Humanities" which would remove the scientific illiterateness from the humanities and make relevant to the sciences

(in a way intelligible to them) the insights of the humanities. I do not intend to discuss Price's proposal at any length, but only to quote its purpose which is: "What the old humanities did for classical learning, the humanities of today must do for science." Whether everyone agrees on this formulation of the past is not as important as the admission that there is a genuine need to reduce the opposition between the sciences and the humanities—fundamentally because both may gain from the exchange. But in what terms can an unobjectionable exchange be made? Reconsideration and refinement of methodological procedures is an *internal* affair to each set of disciplines. Social functions and effectiveness can hardly be the subject of fruitful exchange, unless it is also assumed that one member of the discussion will deliberately violate his own interests. The image of a given discipline as seen by its practitioner may be factually interesting and enlightening but cannot serve as the basis of continuing dialogue.

All of this is not very constructive, but I do have a suggestion for a continuing discussion between the sciences and the humanities. By way of introduction to my suggestion, let me quote Perry Bridgman: "Now these things, which make the individual scientist go, are all deeply human traits, possessed in greater or less degree by all men, in particular by the humanist. It seems to me that the drives which make the humanist go are much like those of the scientist." If this suggestion is to be more than a truism, it must be translated into common issues and concerns. However, to make the translation into common concerns demands that we avoid making the translation into specifically disciplinary terms. It is one thing to admit to the community of "drives," and quite another to interpret those drives in terms of a specific psychology. What I propose instead is to consider the common drives in terms that are not specifically disciplinary but which could find disciplinary applications.

Let us begin with the basic drive in both science and the humanities. Aristotle said it: "All men by nature desire to know." He added that to know means to grasp the causes of things. I think it wise to translate the notion of causal knowledge into a general form—e.g., "to know means to deal in disciplinary fashion with the data of experience." Discipline here means the fixing of insights in symbolic form. In short, a discipline consists in a set of ordered symbols signified in any linguistic form—mathematics included. To be sure, there is a question of how symbols are related to experience, but this is a variable for each discipline. The basic issue is why fix insights into symbols? I raise this question because symbols (and all language) are something artificial and conventional—a substitution instance for experience. Consequently, any discipline is the artful manipulation or organization of signs of actual or possible experience. To make a discipline or to work within any discipline is to artfully or aesthetically transform segments of experience. The world and our experience of it is a continuous affair, and we must freeze the process or anesthetize the flow of consciousness to reflect on any aspect of the world. Symbols act in just that fashion. Symbols—both signs and concepts—paradoxically do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Men desiring to learn, recognize their own changing conditions and create a discipline or science. Such creation is basically an anthropomorphic hypostasis. Men realize that they are not

equally fitted to each day's tasks and that the vagaries of passion and pain, of organic need and social demand, all tend to make thought and thinking discontinuous. To overcome both distractions and interruptions, men invest symbols with constancy and arrange them in patterns to provide a principle of continuity. In short, men make their symbols behave as men ideally would like to perform.

The reason we try to make proofs, inferences, or probability calculi in any disciplinary sense is to exhibit an inherent set of necessary or probable relations. Yet it certainly should be possible to grasp in some intuitive way a conclusion without going through the formality of arranging the premises. The initial point of such construction is not a substitute for the ability to grasp the conclusion; rather it is a way of facilitating the release of intuitive grasp from the uncertainties of time itself. Once a proof has been made, we can, as it were, always recapture what once we saw. But not only that, for the process of inference also leads to new insights precisely because it divests experience of inevitable temporal mutations, and so allows us to see relations among phenomena or among aspects of a phenomena in a stillness which is not native either to the phenomena or to us.

I know that it sounds self-contradictory to say that disciplinary construction and development is not native to us but that, nevertheless, we do it. But then, neither are cars, air conditioners, or men's deodorants indigenous to the human person. Yet he makes and uses them. In short, I am trying to say that a science or discipline is not native to us as is our experience. On the contrary, what is native is the desire to know, and what is further native, is an impatience to know constantly in a constant manner. To be sure, there is scattered ingenuity in the race which artfully expedites the fulfillment of such desires.

The initial proposal to put the sciences and the humanities in a position of possible dialogue is to view all organized intellectual efforts as aesthetic matters, without, of course, employing a given theory of aesthetics.

This approach is more than an *ad hoc* proposal. My reasons for thinking so are, in a way, found both in the history of disciplines and in the biography of each individual. Consider for a moment the fact that children who have a minimum understanding of language love to listen to fairy tales. Children begin to learn about the world through these little allegories. Mother Goose, Grim, and Aesop tell children more about the world than do our most developed factual disciplines. Children are by nature allegorical animals. Now without making any specious analogies to ontogeny and phylogeny, let me say that the history of the development of disciplines does seem to follow a similar pattern. Before astronomy there was astrology, and before chemistry there was alchemy. Poetry is naturally prior to science in the sense of any organized factual discipline.

The significance of this point can be put another way. Every science and discipline has two aspects which I want to call the doctrinal and the prophetic. By doctrinal is meant the specific method, key concepts, and appropriate conclusions, facts or data found in the workings of a science. By prophetic I mean the overarching hypotheses, assumptions, and principles under which the discipline itself is organized. For example, the assumption that mathematics could be used as the language of science revolutionized

the very nature of physics as a discipline. Yet this assumption was not warranted or inferable from anything that had been done in natural philosophy prior to Newton. This is true not only of physics, but of every discipline. Genuine creativity in intellectual life is basically a matter of myth-making—a matter of a new formulation of ideals or a matter of stating ideas which are regulative of disciplinary aspirations and their consequent documentation. The prophetic function of a discipline is a matter of myth-making, of formulating ideals, or specifying regulative ideas. For present purposes these phrases are synonymous, although in fact they are only functionally analogous. The important point is that their function is essentially poetic in an almost Platonic sense—for these are the products of men who are a race apart: men who are inspired. Plato calls the poets “out of their wits,” and if wits here mean acute disciplinary perception, he is correct. For the creation or transformation of a new discipline is never itself a disciplinary matter, and this is an instance of what I mean by saying that poetry is naturally prior to science. Poetry is equally prior to any humanistic discipline, the only difference being that poetry in a disciplinary sense is usually catalogued with the humanities (a fact which is not relevant to this discussion).

The difficulties of the matter can now be stated. The sciences see a definite need for importing the traditional humanitarian concerns with insight and poetic imagination. Yet the humanities are either deeply reluctant or have not found a way to export these architectonic concerns except in the framework of their traditional disciplines. Unfortunately, the disciplinary concerns of the humanities—such as literary criticism—are of no disciplinary value to the sciences (or at least of no immediate value). On the other hand, the humanities see a real need for understanding the importance of the findings of the sciences, yet see no necessary connection between the procedures which produced these findings and the findings themselves. This is an attitude which the scientist is tempted to regard as cultivated ignorance. As a result of this impasse in the face of need, some daring thinkers from both sides periodically suggest a synthesis or integration among all the disciplines, a proposal necessarily doomed to failure.

What I am suggesting is not a synthesis, nor any kind of common marriage between the disciplinary branches. Rather than this, I am proposing a non-disciplinary way to discuss the common concern by prescinding from the admitted differences. The first such common concern is the need for more creativity in all areas of inquiry. My proposal here is to talk about the issue in aesthetic terms—the poetic drives and capabilities in man. This naturally leads to a second dimension of the discussion—a normative one in the minimal sense of a way to evaluate the poetic effort, a way to distinguish between the valuable and the useless, the good and the bad, the socially important and the trivially true. This dimension of the discussion could well be called the *ascetic* as opposed to the first which is the *aesthetic*. The label is not as important as the fact, that because the sciences and the humanities cannot meet on common disciplinary grounds, they must meet on some trans-disciplinary conditions. The first of these is the very making of discipline, which I have called the aesthetic transformation of experience. The exploration of this area of common concern

should lead to more explicitly normative concerns in which the common human condition would be the base for judging the aesthetic enterprise exfoliated in disciplinary development.

Catholic Scholarship and Secular Learning

● Alden Fisher

CARICATURES of the Catholic intellectual and scholar consistently portray him as waging a final and hopeless battle against the steadily advancing forces of secular learning after a series of strategic retreats. The critic has only to point to such historic engagements as the Church vs. Galileo, the Church vs. Darwin, and the Church vs. Freud to establish presumably beyond question the truth of this interpretation of the course of history. Nor can such a portrayal be brushed aside as the distorted view of the militant secularist. Just as every caricature reveals an aspect of truth, so this account of the relations between Catholic scholarship and secular learning has just enough foundation in fact to convince many sincere secular scholars and to disturb many of their Catholic counterparts. Each major advance in science calls into question established views, not just established scientific views, but cultural and religious values as well. Spectacular scientific revolutions, first in the physical sciences, then in biology, and now in psychology, have successively presented formidable challenges to the man of faith. These challenges are almost invariably articulated in terms of the possibility of reconciliation between the truths of faith and the findings of secular disciplines.

What is the Catholic scholar—committed as he is to certain revealed truths, to certain views about the nature of man, to certain moral values—to do in the face of this seemingly alarming situation? How can he retain his scientific integrity and remain faithful to his personal religious commitment? How can he remain true to his faith and pretend to the same scientific and scholarly competence as his secular colleague? Can he be both Christian and scientist and maintain his intellectual honesty? Must he turn his back on either his faith or his science?

What contemporary Catholic scholars and critics alike tend to forget is that conflicts between Athens and Rome, far from being a characteristic phenomenon of modern times, are as old as Christianity itself. In his admirable little book, *Faith and Reason in the Middle Ages*, Etienne Gilson traces the early history of this problem and describes the various positions taken by Catholic thinkers. These descriptions have a completely modern

ring. With us still are the Tertullians for whom the only truth is that of divine revelation. With us still are the Averroists who manage to segregate two distinct and apparently incompatible bodies of truth, that of science (Aristotle's philosophy in the Middle Ages) and that of revelation.. It is to the eternal credit of the Middle Ages that these positions (defended then in terms of philosophy and theology) were not allowed to stand unchallenged. Many men contributed to a definitive resolution of the question; it took a man of great learning, audacious intelligence, and deep and serene faith to gather these elements together and mold them into a solution which remains a monument of wisdom to this day. That man was Saint Thomas Aquinas. The solution which Saint Thomas proposed was, fundamentally, one of order. As Professor Gilson puts it, the difficulty lay in the fact that some theologians wanted to theologize in philosophy, whereas some philosophers wanted to philosophize in theology. Consequently, the only way to bring that controversy to a close was for Saint Thomas to handle philosophical problems as a philosopher and theological problems as a theologian. Three things were immediately apparent to St. Thomas. First, there can be only one truth. Secondly, God could and did reveal certain truths to men and these truths stand with the authority of God Himself. These truths are intelligible and can be to some extent understood by man. They are meaningful, not empty formulae. Finally, St. Thomas was thoroughly convinced that the human mind is capable of attaining genuine truth about the way things are under its own power. One has no more right to doubt a *certain* insight gained by the mind independently of Revelation than one has to doubt Revelation itself. If one falls, so does the other. .

Given these solid presuppositions, St. Thomas went on to establish the relative autonomy of philosophy and theology on the basis of their distinct and proper starting points, methods, and ways of stating their conclusions. But these two disciplines, distinct as they are, do not thereby arrive at two truths. St. Thomas demonstrated how they both contribute in their own proper way, and necessarily so, to the whole truth which is one. At the heart of the difficulty which St. Thomas faced was the pervasive tendency of disciplines to become imperialistic, a recurrent tendency in the history of human knowing. This is the attempt to reduce all valid knowledge to one ideal type, in St. Thomas' day to philosophy or theology, in ours perhaps to mathematics or empirical science. As long as this tendency prevails there can be no satisfactory solution to the dilemma confronting the Catholic scientist or scholar.

St. Thomas' solution is based on a careful examination of the intrinsic character of the disciplines in question and then on a balanced ordering of them with respect to each other. Given the development of fundamentally new modes of knowing and the proliferation of disciplines since Aquinas, the simple application of his solution provides only most abstract answers to contemporary problems. A satisfactory response to the challenge of contemporary secular learning can be achieved only on the basis of a penetrating look at contemporary disciplines in their own terms. What follows is an attempt to sketch in the broad lines of a contemporary solution to this centuries-old problem. The general principles of the solution are taken from Aquinas; their concrete and specific formulation is based upon the

efforts of several vigorous contemporary thinkers.¹

The first step in any viable solution to our problem involves understanding and acquiescing in the given rather than imposing predetermined ideas. In the case in hand, this acquiescence in the given means coming to accept the real plurality of knowledges and methods. In the order of positive science, one finds the natural and physical sciences and other groups of sciences: psychological, social, and historical sciences. In addition to positive sciences, we find philosophical knowledge and theological knowledge. To appreciate the degree of autonomy which each of these enjoys, it is necessary to understand what constitutes them as separate ways of knowing and something of their relation to each other. The first question is: do these sciences possess an inner coherence which is proper to them; does each constitute an autonomous mode of knowing? The term "autonomy" can be understood in two different senses: in an extreme sense which would be a total isolation, or the more narrow sense of self-consistency. Philosophy and the various individual sciences cannot be totally divorced from one another—first, because their results and methods are mutually enriching, and, more importantly, because they study the reality. Furthermore, theology itself is dependent on philosophy for its tools. Thus, to speak of autonomy in the first sense would be contrary to the facts. Whatever autonomy exists is in the second sense.

In the words of Ladrière, "each type of human experience is characterized by evidence which is proper to it. There is the evidence of sense perception, the evidence of aesthetic perception, evidence of the emotions, and so forth. This amounts to saying that the characteristic object of each of these types of experience has its own proper way of offering itself to the mind to which it is presented: We do not live a feeling of fear, for example, in the same way as we live an aesthetic emotion incited in us by the sight of a harmonious monument."² Each one of these modes of evidence is linked with a fundamental attitude or originating intention. The term "attitude" should obviously not be taken in the psychological sense. It is in no way an observable reaction to a given situation, but rather a natural or original modality of the intellect. By fundamental intention I am referring to something which is prior to visible behavior. It is prior with a priority, not of time, but of foundation. A fundamental intention is a way of turning toward reality, a way of approaching the world in which we live. Thus, several different fundamental attitudes can be taken with respect to the same reality. Each fundamental attitude engenders a mode of evidence which is proper to it. Evidence does not exist in a pure state, by itself. It can exist only in relation to a given attitude or intention. The scientific attitude determines the system of evidence proper to it, and the philosophical and theological attitudes determine their systems of evidence. In the evolution of knowledge this system of evidence proper to each fundamental

¹ In particular, upon the work of Henle and Klubertanz; however, for the specific formulation here I am especially indebted to Jean Ladrière whom I have followed rather closely (cf. Ladrière, "La Liberté de la recherche dans les sciences de la nature," in *Liberté et Vérité*, Louvain, Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1954.)

² J. Ladrière, *op. cit.*, p.172.

intention is gradually developed as its field of extension is progressively explored. This exploration involves both the acquisition of results and the perfecting of a method. The results are a function of the method. But the method itself refers to the system of evidences and this latter refers to the original attitude or intention.

It is beyond the limits of our space and our goal to describe in detail each of these fundamental attitudes. Suffice it to say that wherever one discovers such an originating intention, one finds the foundation for the real autonomy or discipline. But at the same time one discovers the proper limits to that autonomy. If each way of knowing can only be true to itself in the rigorous maintenance of its inner consistency and thus of its independence, then it ceases to conform to its proper essence and mission if it goes beyond the limits of its own fundamental attitude or intention and makes affirmations inconsistent with its methods and its evidences. For the Catholic thinker, it should not be simply a question of drawing negative lines. Our faith permits us to make an affirmation of the fundamental coherence of reality. Since it is one and the same Creating Spirit which is the principle of all reality, whether it be of the invisible reality of grace or the visible reality discovered by human reason, there is necessarily a harmony in these orders of reality. There can be no genuine conflict. Most important of all for the believers, philosophical endeavor and scientific research can never be accepted merely in virtue of a principle of intellectual tolerance. Philosophical truth, historical truth, and scientific truth are all parts of the total truth, and it belongs to man to discover all that he can of truth, using all the ways which God has placed at his disposal.

These brief considerations provide the outline of a modern Thomistic solution to the problem posed for a Catholic scholar. This is all very well in the abstract, but what does one do concretely when there seems to be a conflict which all the good will in the world doesn't seem to resolve? Having established the relative autonomy of the various sciences, philosophy, and theology (as Saint Thomas did the relative autonomy of philosophy and theology in his own time), the next step is to issue, in the spirit of St. Thomas, a firm order to theology to cease pretending to be philosophy and science, to science to cease attempting to erect itself into a philosophy and a theology, to philosophy to stick to philosophizing. This does not mean that the individual scientist cannot philosophize, and particularly about the science he knows so well. But when he does so, he must realize that he is taking a step back from his science, that he is no longer working within the same fundamental intention. He is involved in a new way of approaching reality, a way in which his constituted science itself becomes a given of experience along with other equally important givens. Nor does this mean that the philosopher cannot become a scientist. But in order to do so he must place his philosophical approach in suspense and enter into the reality of the science. He must make his own the originating attitude or intention of the science. Failure to do this will only result in miserable science and wretched philosophy. The same invitation and counsel holds for the theologian.

Not only may a man become both a scientist and a philosopher, a theologian and a man of science (or even all three), but it may even be

imperative that some men do this. Saint Thomas himself, in order to eliminate the confusion between philosophy and theology, was obliged to be both a philosopher and a theologian. It was only in being a very good philosopher and a very good theologian that he was able to correct the errors of both. It is clearly impossible for any *one* man to achieve for modern learning what Saint Thomas did for mediaeval learning. The age of the *Summa* is past and that of the Renaissance ideal, the universal man, is gone forever. The contemporary situation demands a *collective* effort and implies a collective responsibility. This means that we must genuinely accept the sincerity and integrity of scholars everywhere, both Catholic and non-Catholic. The Catholic must realize that men of science are everywhere seeking the truth, usually with equal honesty. If some make mistakes, they can be corrected only by a corresponding integrity on the part of the Catholic savant.

All of this points to the absolute necessity of some Catholic thinkers becoming thoroughly competent in all branches of knowledge. It is not enough to learn skills, to become proficient in the application of discoveries made by non-Catholic thinkers. If there is ever to be a reconstruction of secular culture by Catholic scholarship, there must first be a reconstruction of Catholic scholarship; Catholic scholarship must place itself at the very frontiers of learning which is in itself neither Catholic nor secular—or rather, all learning is catholic with a small “c”. It is imperative that some Catholic scholars think through the problems and work out the details of the solution in each field. And this must be a continuing process, for in this area of the wider implications of knowledge there are no definitive solutions. Each new advance brings with it a spate of new questions to be answered. Above all, it must be realized that there are *no* “Catholic positions” in these matters—except the one position of being open to the truth. One must have the humility and the audacity to look at the evidence—and only the evidence—but at *all* the evidence.

This illustrates the advantages and pitfalls facing a Catholic scholar who attempts the reconstruction of secular culture, which can only mean the uncompromising search for the whole truth. Because of his rich tradition and the heritage of centuries of wisdom, he is not as susceptible as his religiously uncommitted colleague to certain errors or distortions. How could he, for example, fall into the naive materialism of nineteenth century scientism? How could he be tempted to think that Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy tells us anything about human freedom? His religious background should also make him more sensitive to areas of evidence which another might overlook. This does not mean the importation into the particular science of propositions from outside. A philosophical or theological conclusion can best be only an extrinsic and negative guide. It means being sure that no evidence pertinent to a particular discipline is neglected. Such awareness can only make for better science. If the Catholic scholar fails to do this, if in the name of Science he is really less objective than his non-Christian colleague, he will one day find someone else pointing to the very evidence which he himself should have long since brought to light. Ironical as this situation may seem, it repeats itself every day—and it is only culpable timidity on the part of the Catholic which permits it. Intellectual audacity

and experimentation are at the very heart of progress in learning. But such audacity is of its very nature a precarious, sometimes even dangerous business. Should not the Catholic be the very one who can run these risks with safety; who is better endowed in spiritual heritage for his intellectual explorations?

On the other hand, the Catholic scholar faces certain pitfalls. Unfortunately he may mistake certain traditional positions as necessarily true simply because they are held by most Catholics. Such mistakes only embarrass the scholar and the Church when the position is proved wrong. All of this means that the advantages of the Catholic scholar heighten his responsibility to maintain the very highest standard of scientific integrity. When conflicts arise between secular and Christian culture, it is not the Catholic scholar's first task to thunder anathemas from his fortress of truth. It is his peculiar task to bring calm, critical reflection to bear upon the science, scholarship, and learning that comprise the foundation for any culture. The cultural edifice can only be as strong as its foundation. Therefore he must examine with utmost care the traditional philosophical and theological positions as well as the findings of the particular sciences in question. Because he knows that truth is one, he can be confident that the conflict will be resolved. But such a serene attitude in the face of the prodigious complexity and the overwhelming advances of learning in our age demands men of the strongest faith and total intellectual honesty. It is the heavy responsibility of the Catholic institution of higher learning to provide the atmosphere of freedom and security in which such rare virtues can blossom and come to full bloom. And it is the responsibility of Catholic educators at all levels to communicate some vision of this perspective to students. If we fail in any of these matters, we are failing to live up to our dual vocation, that of being scholars and Christians in the full sense of the terms. As Christians we firmly believe that man is made to know the truth. And whether it be the truth which is *directly* accessible to him, the truth accessible to him through Revelation, or the truth which he can acquire with the correct use of his reason in his philosophical or scientific endeavors, what he discovers constitutes a part of the one and whole truth and this cannot but be coherent with all the rest.



The Dialogue of Critics

● Brother Fidelian, F.S.C.

NO ONE DOUBTS that the dialectic between various disciplines and areas of scholarship is a significant factor in the general progress of learning. It is equally clear that what is more important in getting us forward is the exchange which occurs within a discipline, the dialogue between differing, and sometimes quite opposed, theories and points of view about particular problems. One can hardly imagine a scholarly discipline without such a dialectic; its sharpness is often a good index to the vitality of the field.

But, aside from eagerness and keenness, there are important differences between the various intramural dialogues of modern learning. Between the conversation in a "humanity" and in a science, especially, there are striking contrasts. Most important, perhaps, is the fact that in a discipline like literary criticism one rarely finds the radical and final displacement (or should we say, "absorption"?) of one approach by another. However, this phenomenon, or something very much like it, is fairly familiar in physics; even more than spectacular success in technological application, it gives one a sense that this discipline is progressing.

But with the critics, there seems to be only change, difference, variety. Over the last three centuries, for instance, there has been change in the critics' conclusions about the achievement of Milton. There is today difference of opinion among our Broadway critics over a middling play. On the other hand, and more significantly, there is a puzzling variety of ways by which the reviewers arrive at a consensus that something is excellent or is terrible.

The standard assumption made about this situation is that the subjective element plays such a large part in the assessment of the human values afforded by literature that no finality is possible to the conclusions of criticism. No position could be more logical, of course, when it is held by the relativist, for whom there is no disputing tastes—among contemporaries or the succeeding generations of critics. It is strange, however, to find this same notion inhibiting in a thousand subtle but palpable ways the dialogue of those who believe, nevertheless, that there is something objective in the literary work susceptible of judgement, that novels, plays, and poems are good or bad, and that some are better than others.

There is the possibility, of course, that, if literary criticism has only a tradition and a prospect of fluctuating interests and fashions, it can have no essential progress. On the other hand, it may be—to adapt a familiar observation—that its problems have been tried and found difficult; the potentialities of the discipline itself are not really wanting. Despite its lamented abundance, that is, it may be that the critical work has not yet been done well or been done well very frequently.

The work of physics, it is clear, has been done well in the last hundred years. The social process responsible for its advance is not radically different, however, for the process that gets one of the humanities any respectable distance: as C. I. Lewis has put it, "a group of men we rely on for judgment because of their experience, their familiarity with a tradition, and

their greater powers of discernment have come up with certain truths."¹

What then has limited the effectiveness of this process in the case of criticism? Clearly, there are many factors. Perhaps the least important, however, are those which, while not changing the intrinsic nature of the process itself, have given it a direction quite different from the one it has among the scientists. I am thinking particularly of the difference created by having value as the object of concern. The point here, the primary point at least, is not that the way is now open to be subjective rather than "objective", or inaccurate rather than precise, or provisional rather than definitive. The primary point is that men are now engaged in assessing, in judging; they are not describing or measuring. The truth they "come up with" is that something is a literary success, is beautiful as literature can be beautiful. And it should be noted, they are not simply reporting that they have enjoyed the work; they are making an assertion about the work itself and about its potentiality to please others.

But if critical conclusions were simply this, they would not seem to require that those we set apart to reach them should be anything more than men with "greater powers of discernment." It is not clear, that is, why they must also have experience and be familiar with a tradition. These latter necessities arise from the reflex nature of criticism. As it has been frequently observed, the critic does not simply judge, but he judges his initial judgment of a work—a play, for instance—by all the relevant knowledge at his disposal: knowledge which he gets from his experience of other plays, of the tradition of plays in general, and of this play in particular. While his first and final work is to assess, therefore, the intermediate work of the critic is to know, to describe, to measure. His function is, in a word, not simple, but complex; his discipline itself is not autonomous in all its operations, but dependent on other disciplines for relevant knowledge.

Thus, if literary criticism were simply a matter of value judgments, we could hardly speak of progress in the discipline. Sensitive judgments, like superb powers of creation, are not the exclusive privilege of later centuries. However, a literary criticism is a judgment provided with a set of reasons. In the provision of such reasons, there can, fortunately, be improvements. We can have more knowledge and more accurate knowledge at our disposal, and we can learn better ways of showing its relevance to our judgments. In both these fashions, criticism can progress.

But we must return to the notion of intramural dialogue among critics. It is clear that this activity has not kept pace with that in other areas of literary study—central areas like literary history and preparatory fields like textual criticism—and even less with related disciplines like linguistics. We need hardly say that the critical dialogue will not be enlivened automatically by the surge of the related dialogues. The scandalously apparent fact is that the house of the critics is not in order. There is new knowledge, but, among critics, no consensus about which particular kinds of knowledge are required for the critical work; for, even more radically there is no agreement about which value the critic is testing. Some agreement has

¹ *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*, (LaSalle, Ill.; 1946), p. 460.

emerged, though, about how knowledge should be focused in the act of criticism. There has been, that is, the growing concentration during the last fifty years on the literary object itself as opposed to extrinsic factors. "In America, at least," as M. H. Abrams remarks, "some form of the objective point of view has already gone far to displace its rivals as the reigning mode of literary criticism."²

We have found, however, that this is a very general mode and, if indeed it reigns, it is a ruling house divided against itself. For criticism is still haunted by two very basic issues: what the precise object of its operation is, that is, what the nature of the literary value is, and, secondly, what the most appropriate and efficient method of dealing with this object is. These problems have kept the critics talking—with ever increasing volume but, unfortunately, with a diversity that gives few signs of diminishing. Not until something like a consensus is reached, however, at least about the first of these problems, can there be any general progress.

There have been, it is true, important individual breakthroughs in these matters by contemporary scholars. The generally poor condition of dialogue among critics, however, has not permitted either the thorough testing of these new concepts or even the recognition which they deserve. And there are many dimensions to this failure. In recent issues of the journals, for example, one can find surveys by leading American scholars of major aspects of these problems, surveys which do not contain a single reference to relevant European scholarship or even to the work of important Europeans now working in this country. Reviews of new books are often superficial, while systematic analysis of critical theories are labeled "criticism of criticism" and go unanswered. Even at a meeting devoted to criticism, it is possible to read a paper diametrically opposed to the doctrine of another paper and to find that no discussion develops about this fact. It is painfully clear, too, that the sections of the Modern Language Association devoted to criticism rarely program papers at the annual meeting in a way to engage different points of view, make any sensible provision for discussion, or provide any continuity from year to year. Even the group perhaps best equipped to arrange confrontations of opposed theories and rational discussion of their differences—The English Institute—has frequently failed to create this stimulation.

The dialogue of critics, and especially the academic critics, is thus hampered in many ways. These limitations, though, are rather symptoms than causes of the present malaise. More fundamentally responsible, I think, are certain prejudices regarding the critic as a professional, prejudices which in every instance limit the rigor of his dialogue and so the progress of his discipline. And these are prejudices of the critic's public and of the critic himself.

As far as the public is concerned, it is no exaggeration to say that, except in the rare case of the Broadway critics who, as a group, wield real economic power, there is a general reluctance to grant critics a function as distinct and serious as that of other intellectual workers in our society.

² *The Mirror and the Lamp*, (New York, 1953), p. 28.

Our critics are far less distinct a class than, say, our physicists. One reason for this, as C. I. Lewis has remarked rather nicely, is that "the subjective conditions for apprehending the beautiful are somewhat more commonly satisfied than are those for the appreciation of truth in quantum mechanics." Thus, the man in the street, having few doubts about his ignorance of mechanics, readily identifies the physicists as those who know these mysteries and who are pushing that scientific enterprise forward. But the same man, convinced of what he likes in the way of a play or a novel and seeing what appears to be only similar convictions in the critic, naturally takes him to be simply another pedestrian in his own street.

In a certain measure the modern critic can blame himself for this lack of clear status. While he has been almost too successful in selling his product (capitalizing on the generally unsettled condition and the widespread questioning of values in our age), he has ironically enough, been much less successful in clarifying to the public his function and its essential difference from their own dealings with literature. He has, in fact been much more anxious to emphasize the continuity of his work with the broad, general, and unreflective interests of the public at large. He seeks, in a word, to escape the odium of specialization. He is trying to play down the obvious fact that he is performing, or attempting to perform, specialized operations on literature for which the layman has usually neither capability, interest, nor time—though he needs and demands the conclusions of such work. If the critic owns up to any special role, it is to the modest one of helping the layman understand what the writer has tried to say, apparently not too successfully.

The critic's punishment, fittingly enough, has been to realize finally that he is burdened with a public image that has indeed very little of the specialist about it. Perhaps, we should say he is only beginning to realize his situation, for his mood is still quite egalitarian. So he continues, in the name of more fruitful dialogue among all the members of his household, to raise his voice against class distinctions. In the Sunday supplement, he takes the quarterlies to task for their jargon and their restricted interests; in the quarterlies, he objects that the academic critics and the professors are talking only to one another and not to the readers of quarterlies and Sunday supplements. The second protest is strange indeed. As one recent observer of the scene has suggested: "what prompts the objection is the fact that academic criticism is often 'technical'—in short, that it is sometimes academic. But if academic critics are to do the work proper to academic criticism, I should think this must necessarily be so."

And again,

We do not complain because physicists address their technical discoveries and proposals to other physicists in terms that for a layman amount to a code, and leave to others the job of preparing pamphlets instructing layman in the use of such applications of their science as may be made, also usually by others. The layman himself demands some technical competence in those with whom he discusses the niceties of his favorite sport or hobby, and certainly his business. I do not see why, if we take matters of value seriously,

we should require those who are most advanced in pursuit of knowledge concerning them to behave differently . . .³

But they do, unfortunately, behave differently nowadays, for the egalitarian spirit has invaded the highest towers of academe. Within the last few years, for example, one could read in a philosophical journal an important scholar rejecting one of the modern theories of poetry on the plea that students would think it rather "cold." But when the work of a fellow scholar purports to show what poetry is, it would seem much more important to weigh the report against reality as we know it rather than against its effect on learners.

This premature concern with rhetoric and pedagogy has led to a notable slackening in the quality of scholarly discourse among critics themselves, as that is represented, for example, by the New Criticism in its university setting. There, as elsewhere, the dialogue among colleagues degenerates to the imprecision of the dialogue one has developed in classroom and seminar. The end result is a new Acedia. The pretense of this spirit is that the human values afforded by literature will somehow be better protected (presumably from the spirit of science and technology), if not better understood, when we take a more relaxed approach to them. But this slackening has its dangers; it can, in fact, lead to what Robert Oppenheimer, in a recent lecture, called "philistinism" and described as the belief "that only those things which it requires no trouble to understand are important." At a time when it is so difficult to encompass even the smallest area of human learning, it is very tempting, he continues, "to find reasons for closing our eyes and ears to things and saying, 'No, no, this cannot be the reality; the reality must be easier.'"⁴ But nothing, Valéry answers, "is more complex or more difficult to disentangle than the strange combination of qualities found in language," language which is given an even more complex and subtle order by the poet.⁵

In the measure that we have been unsuccessful in coping with this difficult art of the poet and in defending our judgments about it, we should, one would think, logically direct ourselves to greater rigor in our study. At the level of scholarship as such this would mean, negatively, less of the distraction created by attempts at popularization. Positively, it would certainly require, among other things, the development of a more intense dialogue. Needed for this progress, of course, are the qualities of all good dialectic—openness, a deeper understanding of other positions, a common desire for knowledge that can support diversity at length and that will not look for half-truths to create abortive compromise and artificial unity. Important, too, is the need to carry on the dialogue about the fundamental problems in a more clearly distinguished discipline of literary theory as such. Not least important, will be the prudent choice of issues for the dialogue. They will have to be problems that demand the utter involvement of both parties and yet leave room for what Emerson suggested is the third member of any real dialogue, the truth.

³ James Craig La Drière, *Directions in Contemporary Criticism and Literary Scholarship* (Milwaukee, 1955), pp. 53-54.

⁴ "Tradition and Discovery," *ACLS Newsletter*, X (October, 1959), 19.

⁵ Paul Valéry, *The Art of Poetry*, tr. Denise Folliot (New York, 1958), p. 191.

Doshie

● Lee Brian

FOR A TIME during my boyhood it was an unwritten law in our household that my father's judgment in all things was infallible and, consequently, his every whim had to be gratified.

We had moved from the large comfortable house on Forest Avenue into a six room cottage on a side street, and though our financial plight was chiefly the result of his lack of business acumen, no one in our family, least of all my mother, ever reminded him of that fact. In the small cottage, where we always seemed to be in one another's way, we learned to make adjustments, but not my father. Six of us, including the maid, shared one small bathroom, but he alone use the private bath which adjoined his bedroom; and in contrast to ours, which generally was cluttered with wet towels, soggy newspapers, and slippery bars of soap, his was tidiness itself, with two heavy towels freshly laundered on the racks and a fresh scent of eau de cologne filling the air.

He was the soul of order. He had a fetish for carrying only new currency in his wallet; the old bills he gave to my mother for household expenses, and humorously he liked to chide her on the way the bills slipped through her fingers. His shirts had to be ironed with special care, and God help the maid who used starch in them.

For breakfast we ate, crowded into the small breakfast room, eating

on the wooden table without cloth and in full gaze of the garbage pail in the kitchen. But under no circumstances would he come into the breakfast room, and for good reason. He hated anything cramped or crowded. When he sat down to meals, it was in the dining room at a beautifully set table, replete with silverware that had come from the large house on Forest Avenue. On Sunday mornings, when he permitted the family to eat with him, we were on good behavior and sensible of the occasion. During the early part of the meal he corrected our grammar, my brother's and mine, and reminded us frequently how to use a fork with our eggs; repeatedly he cautioned us against reading the funnies and not enough of Walter Scott. We knew we could never please him, and as children we aimed merely to win from him a grudging approval. Praise with him was as rare as May snow.

With his second cup of coffee on Sunday morning, conversation came to an end, for he was ready to listen to music. He had a large collection of albums, but on Sundays he preferred Schubert or Brahms. He would send me to put on something that he had previously selected. The machine was an old-fashioned pale walnut Edison gramophone, enormous in size, and my mother used to complain mildly how heavy it was to move when she or the maid had to dust.

While my father listened to the music in the dining room, we would sit in silence. Even normal room sounds annoyed him while the record played. My mother and the maid had to walk on tiptoe while they removed the silver and dishes from the table. After breakfast, if the weather was nice, we sat on the side porch with him, the gramophone going full blast the whole time, and no one dared to lower the volume.

Despite my father's rather arbitrary ways, and thanks to my mother's benign disposition, April reigned throughout the year in our household; the order which my father worshipped and demanded of us, she never seemed to produce in the house; and it was something he never allowed her to forget. Chiefly, it seemed to us children, this deficiency had to do with the problem of keeping an all purpose maid. My father, accustomed to servants and to instant attention in the old house, could not understand why my mother was unable to deal with the maid and why each in turn left us almost as soon as she had started. He put it down to a lack of firmness and decision on my mother's part. We shared his opinion, though we were less verbal about expressing it. We all deplored mother's weakness and hoped that in time my father would help her overcome it.

One blustery March morning when we were late for school and the baby was crying and our lunches weren't ready and my father was cross, Doshie came to work for us; and she set upon her tasks with such zest and energy that we knew at once she was a godsend. With her arrival, at least one problem in our household seemed solved. She was a born servant, with her strong

capable hands and big bones, and though she couldn't have been long out of her teens, she looked much older, and we thought of her as being my mother's age. Actually we were surprised one day to find that she was only twenty-one.

My father determined at the beginning not to let Doshie rule the household, for he felt that my mother's sad experience with maids in the past had been due to her natural tendency to be imposed upon. He therefore was unusually vigilant for any sign of independence or rebellion on Doshie's part. The first Sunday after her arrival, while we were listening to Brahms in the living, he heard her making an unnecessary amount of noise as she replaced the silver in the drawer, and he called out, "Doshie, can't you be less noisy!"

"Beg pardon," she said, coming to the doorway.

"Less noise, less noise," he called in that imperious voice he sometimes reserved for servants and children. "You are interrupting some of the most sublime music ever written." And then seeing that she stared at him without being able to make a suitable reply, he dropped his tone of belligerency and invited her to come in to listen. Embarrassed, she mumbled something and fled into the kitchen. My mother hurried in. "Be careful," she whispered to my father; "we don't want to lose her."

My father, who had been warned before, snorted at the prospect of having to be careful with a servant. "I'd rather do without help than be subjected to this kind of tyranny," he said.

"She's the most obliging and helpful girl I've had," said my mother, "and I don't want to offend her."

"It's absurd," said my father, "in your own house not to be mistress — to let an ignorant peasant girl, in her own docile way, to be sure, dictate to you."

"Oh, don't make an issue over that again, Eric," my mother said.

"You're the one making the issue," he said. "All I did was to invite her in to listen, but you're unwilling to give her the chance to appreciate good music." And though my mother protested, he would not relinquish the notion and went for Doshie.

"Eric," exclaimed my mother when she saw Doshie follow him back into the room, "she hasn't time to listen. We've got dishes to do and the baby to bathe and —"

But for answer he merely put his finger to his lips. I can see them now: Doshie in her apron, her cheeks still red from the country air, her big clumsy hands in her maternal lap, staring at the gramophone, frightened and awed; and my mother in her own gingham house-coat, spotted with egg, as usual, smiling at Doshie, as if to reassure her that she needn't take either my father's antics or the music seriously.

"Isn't it magnificent?" said my father. "There's the major theme again. Now the oboes have it. Listen to the oboes." And now his grave courteous manner caused Doshie additional embarrassment, and she moved her head appealingly in the direction of my mother, who finally took her away.

The following Sunday, while we were listening to Schubert, my mother sent Doshie in to lower the machine, for the loud volume was making the baby restive. "It's time the baby learned to sleep to Schubert," my father said. My mother

came in to remonstrate with him, but he wouldn't let her get near the machine. "A child of mine has to appreciate Schubert," he said, and my mother, defeated as usual, had to retreat.

"We can put the baby on the porch," said Doshie to my mother. "She won't hear the music there."

Doshie soon learned from my mother not to cross my father, and in time, she lost most of her fear of him. She even grew bold enough to refuse the Sunday morning invitation.

Out of the five dollars a week that Doshie received, she kept out only twenty-five cents, the remaining being left with my mother, who deposited it for her in a large Louis Sherry candy box kept in the bottom drawer of my mother's dresser.

Doshie's expenses were small. Once a month she went home to Caddo Mills, and then she would draw out three dollars; eighty cents went for her bus ticket, and the balance was used for gifts for her family: a box of chocolate-covered cherries and a pair of stockings for her mother, smoking tobacco for her father. She returned to us on Sunday night laden with presents: churned butter, a sack of country fresh eggs, sausage and preserves, home-made popcorn.

We used to tease Doshie about her savings, and my brother told her once that she had close to a thousand dollars, but she wouldn't believe him, whereupon he tried to work it out mathematically, but, becoming involved in difficulty, presented the problem to my father, and he figured out to the penny that Doshie should have one hundred and sixty-three dollars, an amount which was verified when Doshie opened the Louis Sherry box and counted her bills.

My father suggested that she open an account at the bank, but she was afraid of banks, and no doubt she was right. I was just after the time when the banks were closing throughout the country, and my father himself had lost heavily in two banks. Seeing now that Doshie would have nothing to do with banks, he advised her to convert the money into large denomination bills and these could be locked away in a drawer. "They'll make you a suitable dowry," he said. My mother explained to Doshie what a dowry was, and she blushed and giggled. The idea of Doshie's getting married amused us all.

A few nights later, just as we were finishing supper, the phone rang. I answered it. A man with a blurred voice asked for Doshie. It took me a few minutes to realize who he was calling for. She had never received a telephone call before, and conversation at the table stopped until she returned. "Is a relative of yours in town?" asked my mother.

"No'm," said Doshie. She was removing the dessert dishes. "Just an old friend from Caddo Mills."

"If he's in town long, you might ask him out."

"Yes'm," said Doshie in her usually laconic way.

"I bet he's your boy friend," said my brother.

Doshie giggled and her checks flushed.

"Any night you want to entertain him," said my mother, "you are welcome to use the parlor."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Doshie. We hardly expected her to take advantage of the offer, but sure enough a few nights later, my mother cautioned us to stay out of the room that night because Doshie

had requested permission to receive her gentleman friend. As might be expected, my father reacted most unfavorably to the prospect of being denied the use of his own living room.

"Maybe he's interested in good music," my mother said brightly.

My father merely frowned, but, perhaps recognizing for once the necessity of complying with my mother's request, he presented no other obstacle to the plan. We were dying to see what the young man looked like and ran to the door when the bell rang. Our surprise couldn't have been greater if the Man in the Iron Mask had stood there.

He was surely as old as my father but much heavier, and he wore an odd coat which did not match his baggy trousers; there was a general air of disrepute about him that chilled us. He also smelled of what we took to be a too generous use of bay rum or rubbing alcohol.

We came to report our disappointment. "Now, now," said my mother, "you boys have no business spying. Stay in the breakfast room."

We did, doing our lessons, my father reading. Occasionally from habit he would grumble as he looked through the doorway when the swinging door opened: the idea of being denied the use of his own living room! And each time my mother would reprove him. I was having trouble with fractions and he helped me, working two very difficult problems which had stumped Miss Evans, and when I told him this, he was so pleased that he stayed in a good humor for an hour and even forgot Doshie and her friend. Earlier, my mother had taken a pitcher of lemonade and a plate of cookies into the living room. She returned to us almost as shocked as

we had been. "Why, he's an old man," she said, "an old man."

"I just wonder how long they're going to stay," said my father.

"They're going for a walk," said my mother. "So you're free to go back in."

We could see the man as he walked out on the porch holding Doshie's arm. He had a fat red neck, pudgy in back, and the skin was grizzled like a turkey's. The whole house reeked of what my father informed us with disgust was cheap whiskey.

"Some suitor," said my father, "some suitor." He opened the front door to freshen the room. Then he put on the Trout. He made it as loud as he could because he didn't want to hear any talk. He wanted us to be quiet. My brother and I read the funnies. Presently above the music we heard whispers from the frontporch, and then the blurred voice of Doshie's friend was raised and once we heard Doshie say, "All right," and they both came inside. "Where's your mother?" Doshie asked me.

"She's in the kitchen," I said.

"I'll be back in a minute," Doshie said to Isom — we had learned his name. He stayed by the door while she went in to see my mother. He tried to focus on the music, but it was beyond him. My father, to whom he had been introduced by Doshie, took no notice of him, but almost instinctively raised the knob of the machine. I felt relieved by the gesture, because I knew that my father, once he did notice Isom, would be frightfully cutting, and I didn't know how Isom, whose condition frightened me, would react.

The volume came up even louder than before, but after a minute I was surprised to hear Isom talking

to my father. "I beg your pardon," he said, "Doshie's just gone to tell the missus that her and me are aiming to get married."

My father looked at Isom. He was surprised but concealed his feelings by merely nodding.

"I helped raise that girl," explained Isom. "She and me been keeping company for some time."

"That's interesting," said my father.

"Now we'd just like to trouble you for that little bit of money you're keeping for her." Oh, I thought, now my father's going to laugh right in Isom's face, but at that moment before my father could laugh, my mother and Doshie came in. My mother went directly to Isom. "This is so sudden," she said. "I'm sorry — Mister — I didn't get your name."

"Isom," said my father, who was exceptionally good at remembering names.

"Yes, Mr. Isom, this is most sudden — your plan to marry Doshie. And isn't it rather late for the ceremony tonight?"

Doshie was rubbing her big red hands together and standing pigeon-toed behind my father's soft chair. My mother was standing close to her. "Can't you wait till tomorrow, Doshie? You must give your folks the opportunity to come to town." Doshie stopped rubbing her hands together and turned to Isom, as if the proposition was for him to consider. My mother was still talking. "I'll bake a cake tomorrow. I've just read a new recipe in tonight's paper. With pineapple filling."

"Yes'm," said Doshie to whom the idea appealed.

"We aim to marry tonight," said Isom. "She wants her money tonight."

For some reason he was speaking to my father, and he mumbled his words out of the side of his mouth in a way that continued to fill me with fear. It occurred to me that my father did not sufficiently gauge the menace presented by Isom's ugly manner, or else he would pay him more attention.

"Doshie," said my mother, still trying to reach her, "do you really want to marry tonight?"

"Yes'm," said Doshie, but without any force in her voice.

"She'd better get her money," said Isom again to my father, but my father now commenced what seemed for all the world like a game, a casual and unpremeditated game, in the course of which he changed the record, replaced it with Brahms' First, turned the volume up, and looked, even though Isom was staring sullenly at him, as if he were deep in thought on some problem connected with fractions.

"You tell your wife to give Doshie her money," insisted Isom, and at this moment my father, seeing perhaps that he could not delay except at his own peril, taking some action, looked at my mother. "Marcia," he said tentatively, "Marcia —"

My mother shook her head.

Isom's lips moved, and he showed his yellow teeth. "You let Doshie have her money," he said in a cold voice that made my blood freeze.

"Marcia," continued my father in his clear imperious voice, the voice which he used when he called for silence at the table. "Marcia, you have no right to keep the girl's money."

"Tomorrow," said my mother. I couldn't believe my ears and dared not look at my father. "Tomorrow will be time enough, and I'm sure Doshie agrees. She doesn't want to

get married without a veil. Now do you, Doshie." I couldn't tell whether Doshie agreed or not. "Tomorrow," continued my mother, "we'll get up to the attic and look through those old trunks. I'm sure I can find a veil. You'll love it, Doshie."

"Yes'm," said Doshie. But I hardly heard her reply. I was watching Isom again. His face had hardened and his fist was taking shape. I don't know if my mother saw the fist or not, or if she heard his heavy breathing. She walked past him and held the screen door open. "Good night, Mr. Isom," she said. It was that simple. I guess he was too surprised to do anything except stumble out; and even then, my mother, quick as usual, stood between him and Doshie, who still kept her pigeon-toed stance by the soft chair. After Isom had gone, my mother went up to Doshie and put her hand on the girl's shoulder. "You really didn't want to go with him, did you, Doshie?"

"No'm," said Doshie.

After a minute she started to collect the glasses and cake plates. Only then did I hear the Brahms. The record was still on, the second movement, I noted. I remembered it had been going full blast earlier, but now the music was hardly audible. Surely Doshie hadn't touched the machine, for, as she gathered the dishes and picked up the crumbs from the carpet, she seemed totally unaware that it was playing. She started to leave the room, and my mother said, "Tomorrow, Doshie, we must dust in here. How fast the dust settles on everything! Just look at it!"

"Yes'm," said Doshie.

"And we must take the curtains down, too," said my mother. "And we might as well wash the win-

dows."

I glanced at my father, wondering why he didn't object to the conversation, why, too, he hadn't demanded to know who had dared lower the volume, but he stood close by the gramophone, with his head

bent over it, straining to hear the familiar notes above their conversation. He might have been in another world, or else —

That night I went to bed in a funny frame of mind.

Five Haiku

● James Kritzeck

Thunder;
rain's crescendo:
Jun-ko plucks a string
and its sound fades slowly.

Summer clowns;
necessary smiles:
would laughs erase
Jun-ko's winter love?

Red berries on far banks;
autumn:
how will Jun-ko change
while I am gone?

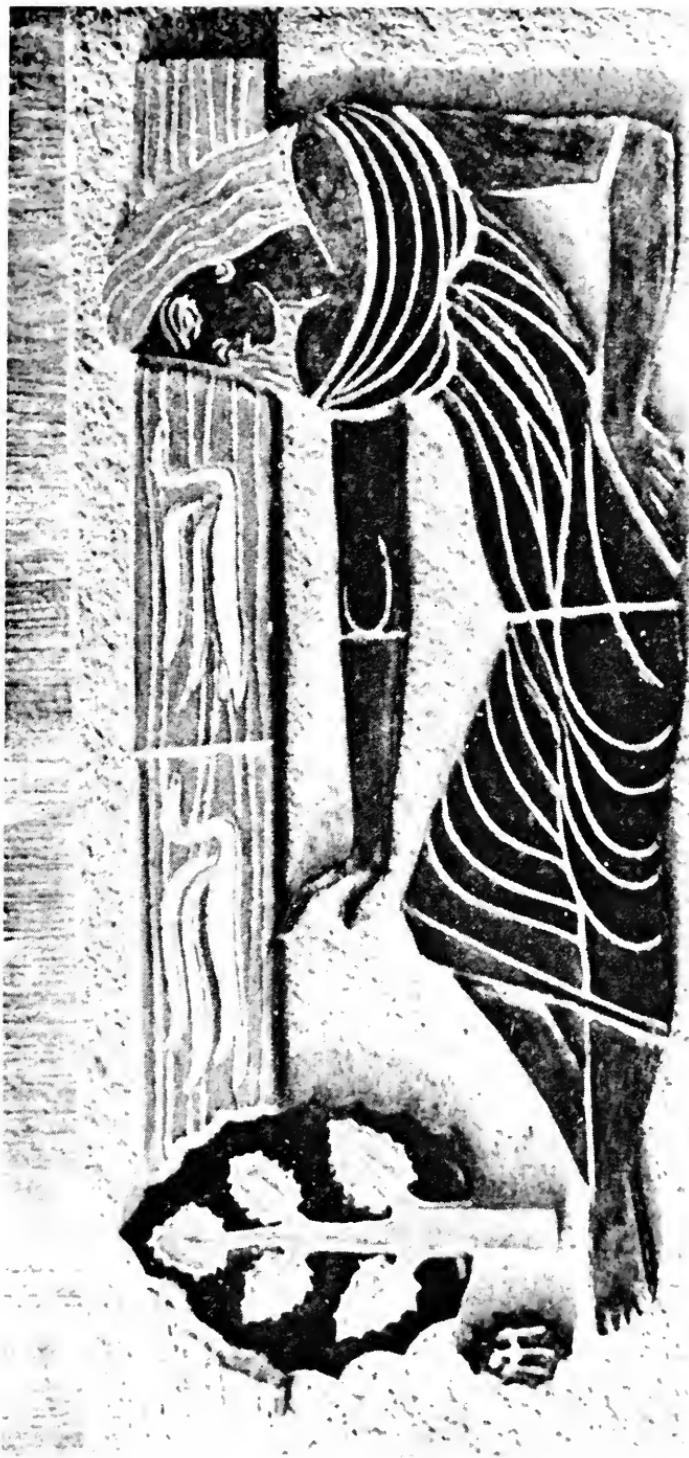
Cold-night fires;
a cloud moves toward a star:
I am learning
Jun-ko's language.

Tarnished moons; withered
blossoms; spoilt spring:
our last season,
Jun-ko, apart.

FRANK ELISCU is working on a statue of the Blessed Virgin for the church of the Father Judge Mission Seminary at Lynchburg. He has just completed the collaborative Medal of Honor for the Architectural League of New York. As he says, "My work will continue to show the Humanism of Man and Art."



CAROUSEL, by Frank Elisen. Bronze. Artist's Collection.



A CERAMIC PANEL by Joost Marechal. Ceramic on Plaster. Artist's Collection.

Hope

● Sister Mary Honora, O.S.F.

Windfall of impendent whiteness — snow —
does not un-Damon Pythias. It chalks
the minutes on the ground, and rather lessens
the peril routed in the albino air
hoarfrosting a sequel predestinate.

Damon in his cell leans out toward cotton
blobs that run silver down his cheek until
he sees the plane of Pythias a crystal ship
at port.

Old Dionysius notes the ground is
greening where warm boot and sandal blunder.

Psalm to Mary

● Dolores Kendrick

When God plucks my red soul
Into the sour wind
Cover me with your doved Amen
And fly through the white sky
With me (moon-driven,
Blessed and un-boned) to the
Sun-century;
Then press my naked tongue
To the ash of sea and star
And let me go.

←
JOOST MARECHAL, painter and ceramist, is Professor of Art at The Institut Superior, Saint Lucas, Ghent, Belgium.

Exile

● Margaret Reardon

I have slept this night with sorrow and its dark tyranny.
Now God give me your Omnipotent hand
For strength to bear the coming day.
The day when we must go forth
In the blindness of fear and desolation
From this place that saw our birth and growth,
And now our bitter age.
Our roots have been torn from the reluctant soil,
Leaving a gaping wound in the earth,
And a dark mound of sorrow.
Sister, awake, the hour draws near
When the sad convoy approaches
That leads us down to the desolation of the exiling sea.
It is almost day. The dawn is creeping over Knoch-na-Brun
Quenching with its misty fingers the small stars.
It creeps over the white bloom of the May tree
That stands unchanged since childhood.
Only ourselves are changed,
And we behold its beauty through the orbs of death.
Through the window I see the fields
Where our father plowed.
There is the lane through which our people passed
To their lone sleep in the holy meadow beyond the glen.
Give me our last poor treasures for the trunk,
And the bit of candle that shone light to our mother
On her last journey long ago.
Now covering them all like a shroud
I'll put my mother's shawl
And quickly, girl, before I remember
Its folds across her warm breast
And break my heart with sorrow.
The time is at hand, there's knocking at the door.
Quench the candle, sister,
Better the darkness as we leave this familiar room.
Then shall we last behold it
With the happy eyes of childhood,
Rather than through the scalding, bitter tears of age.

Some Friend's Soul

● **Daniel J. Rogers**

Some friend's soul is borne to me, upon
occasion, a tear full at a time —

nearnesses brimming to garble my
old knowledge. Sympathy lies useless,
new scotch loses strength in the pouring.

Across from me he settles down, half-
shamed at being ashamed of a tear;
I sit and wait and need to feel I
also serve, denied, meanwhile, under-
ground meanderings of his man soul.

Books? And hearth? Or loves and the children
laughter-light? They hardly fill, themselves,
a need as this. Nor do I, on edge

of hushed, nicely smogged-up chasm, thirsting
half brewed knowings of heaven-soaked nows.

Known at Grand Canyon

● **Rita M. Schaeffer**

An almost raw, a new, a naked pink,
One second's cicatrice upon the place;
Perhaps a grace note counterpointing space,
A baby lizard quivers at the brink.

Such blistering of being will be found,
Be toed by tourists sentimentally.
But one mercuric shiver sets him free.
A fluid even to the feel of ground.

See How All My Craft

● Suzanne Gross

See how all my craft, falcon-keen, diving
at my heart become his heart, taloned words
shot out to pierce it, stay it in its high riding
sure and alone the rhythms of inviolable light, suddenly
veers, sheers off, slips on a trivial current,
or leaps, silent, up the sky.

Speech was never found edged to this end.
Music perhaps, perhaps dancing: the soaring and wing-risen
yearning of the heart past poetry as my mind becomes
the hushed and holy stage on where he comes and goes,
masked in his simple and outward earth, or a king's gold,
or the color of his griefs that only my grieving knows,
all beyond my tears.

The bravest bull never paws the ground importantly,
never bellows for his bravery or pain. Will-wedded
to his one want, he charges, follows, finds and gores,
awaits death, dies, all soon and soundlessly,
but for the brief profound vibration his need's rush makes
through the mortal sand.

As he would surely be, so I must be ashamed
to raise banners of words for my love's cause. Let others,
seeing me wear this penitent's gown, suffering
for joy, or this better than a god's enchanted armor, exulting
in my sorrows, say for me: she kneels and bleeds on holy stones,
she arms for her shining death.

No longer is it loss not to word him to the world.
Only my heart and the heart of Christ at last
know or care that he shines so, moving solitary and beautiful,
under and through the weight of his seaward darkening days;
or that I sit patient and still, one-willed
on the shelving bank of time.

Contributors

FOUR QUARTERS warmly welcomes to its pages two eminent professors of art, VICTOR TEMMERMAN and JOOST MARÉCHAL, of the internationally famed school of art, *The Institut Superior, Saint Lucas*, Ghent, Belgium. Recently three students of Saint Lucas captured the coveted first, second, and third prizes in the national architectural contest for church design. Saint Lucas is conducted by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. HELMUT HATZFELD, Professor of Romance Languages and Literature at The Catholic University of America, is internationally known for his studies in stylistics. His paper here was read at a recent Honors Convocation at La Salle College at which he received the honorary degree, Doctor of Letters. FREDERICK J. CROSSON is an Assistant Professor in the General Program of Notre Dame; he has recently pursued post-doctoral research at Louvain. ANTHONY NEMETZ is a popular teacher of philosophy at Ohio State University. He has contributed scholarly studies to *The New Scholasticism, Modern Schoolmen, Thought*, and other journals. ALDEN FISHER is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at St. Louis University; his paper is part of a lecture given originally in the Graduate Series at St. Louis. BROTHER FIDELIAN, F.S.C., who teaches English at La Salle College, has contributed verse and criticism to earlier issues of **four quarters** and to other magazines. JAMES KRITZECK, Assistant Professor of Oriental Languages at Princeton University, contributes to *Commonweal* and most of the scholarly journals in the Oriental field. **Four quarters** published his very first poem in 1953. In June he is returning to Japan. SISTER MARY HONORA, O.S.F., publishes poems in many magazines and has received special recognition in *Approach*. DOLORES KENDRICK spent last summer at the University of Mexico, where she did a study on the poetry of the Aztec Indians. MARGARET REARDON has published a one-act play, *The Portrait*, and recently her work on Tom Moore's visit to Philadelphia in 1804 appeared in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* as a feature article. DANIEL J. ROGERS teaches English at Loras College. LEE BRIAN is a native of Texas but teaches in Oregon. RITA SCHAEFFER, busy mother of six children, had a close brush with distinction when she was awarded second prize in a poetry contest held annually in Missouri. BRUCE P. WOODFORD is currently working on a collection of poems, *The Adobe Makers*. He also is completing a book on the philosophy of history implicit in the writings of Soren Kierkegaard.

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